

# Feminists must unite on Persian Gulf issues

As much as it would like to, the feminist movement can't seem to incorporate the anti-war movement into itself.

Feminists have been speculating for a long time that, perhaps, if women were in charge of the world there would be a lot less gratuitous bloodshed needed to maintain peace. But some factors in the gulf crisis are keeping feminism from having the driving force it needs to be a leader in the anti-war movement.

Most voices from the women's movement have been saying "no" to war. Before the war began, the National Organization for Women approved a resolution calling for the immediate withdrawal of U.S. troops from the Persian Gulf. NOW President Molly Yard told the Washington Post the United States should not support



Ellen Hobbs  
Columnist

Kuwait or Saudi Arabia because of their blatant oppression of women.

Yard also said female U.S. soldiers had been asked to "respect the culture" of the Saudis by bowing their heads to Saudi men, and if the White House had sent troops to protect South Africa and asked black soldiers to show deference to white South Africans, the United States would be outraged.

While the women's movement withdraws its support for the war, it's having a hard time not stepping on the

toes of those women still supporting it.

From day one, feminism has supported women who have decided to take on jobs supposedly reserved for men, especially in the armed services. And now the war the women's movement feels so set on protesting is the first in which women will play a major role, not in actual combat, but certainly in real, front-line danger.

This leaves feminism in a quandary. Does supporting the anti-war movement mean jerking the support out from under female soldiers in the Persian Gulf?

Both Ms. Magazine and off our backs, a women's news journal that has been in publication since 1971, ran stories in their February issues on Stephanie R. Atkinson, the first woman to go AWOL and receive and an "Other Than Honorable" discharge from the U.S. military. The off our

backs article also included stories of another female soldier who was AWOL and two more who were seeking conscientious-objector status.

The articles seem to show support for women who are protesting the war by resisting being shipped to the gulf. But these women are *already enlisted in the military*— they could be an example of women who have dropped the charge of "making it in a man's world" and gotten out before they were sent to war with "the boys."

Feminism is sitting on a fence: It can't decide if it is going to support only some women and lend the rest of its support to the anti-war movement, or if it is going to continue toward its expressed goal and support women 100 percent.

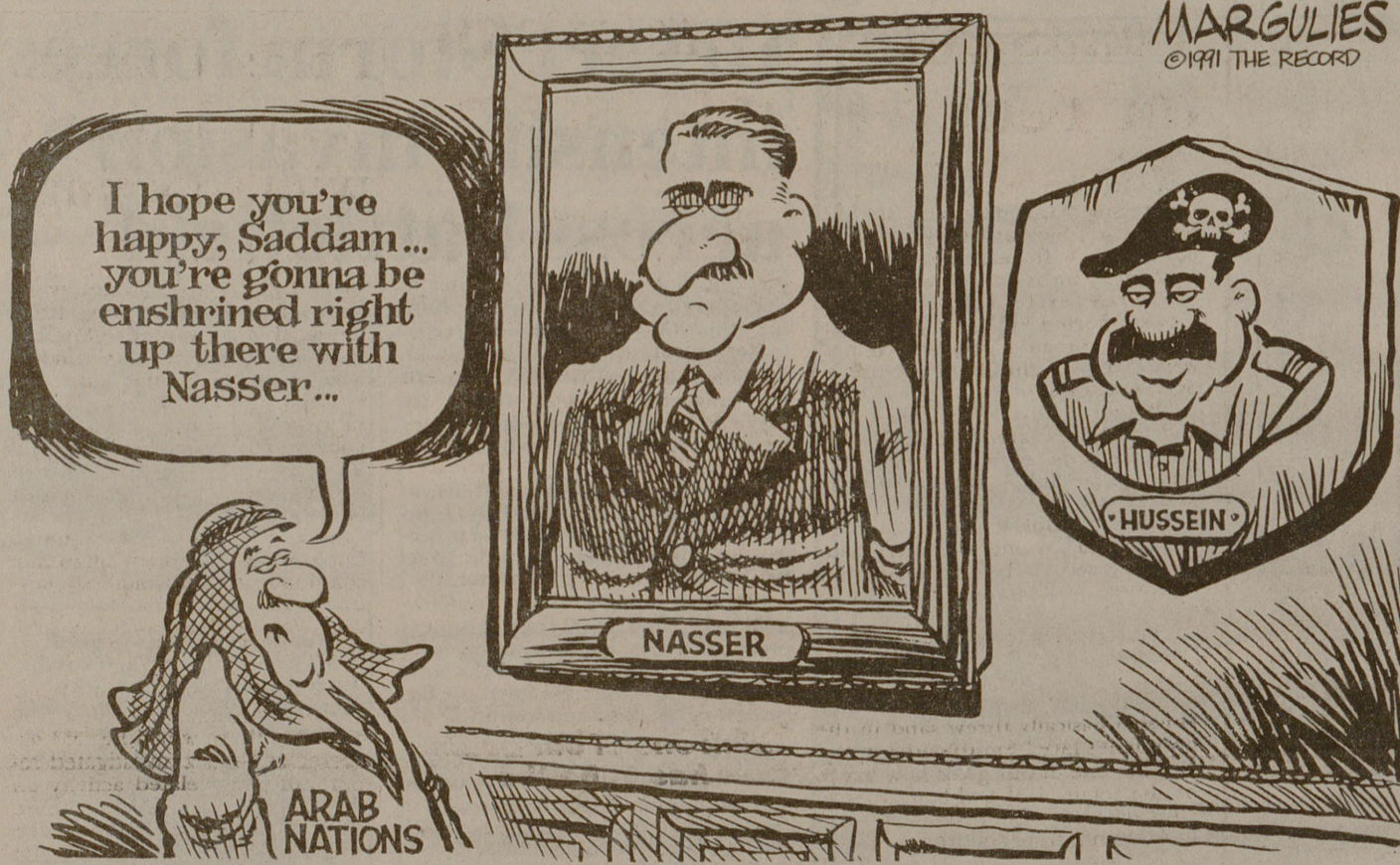
It's no crime for feminists to be against the war and protest. Nor is it wrong to be of the opinion that, in

general, war seems to be a "male thing."

But as feminists working for women we can't forget that there are other women out there who, for whatever reason, support the war. We can't allow ourselves to be lead away from supporting women who are soldiers. Jobs we encouraged them to get. And we can't let ourselves get so involved protesting for peace that we forget to be supportive of the mothers that the war to be won so their sons and, of course, daughters, can come home.

Feminism doesn't need the split. It must allow women who support the war to continue to be a part of its ranks. Sisterhood must stay strong enough to make it through this aggression and work toward a less sexist peacetime.

Ellen Hobbs is a senior journalism major.



## Racial prejudice Ignorance perpetuates racism, discrimination

When I had my first real bout with racial prejudice (I say first, because being a black woman in a dominant white male society, I look for many more to come throughout my life), I found myself upset and wondering how God could create people with such shallow attitudes toward others.

I already had prepared my letter to The Battalion, condemning all who were racists, when it dawned on me that I was being no better.

By condemning them, I not only showed no self-control, but I felt I was not showing the proper Christian attitude. So with those thoughts, I re-evaluated my views and composed another letter.

It being Black History Month, I found myself unable to just sit back and let this racial incident pass, for I truly believe racism (whether white or black) and prejudice of any kind is not acceptable. But instead of getting upset, I tried to figure out ways I could deal with it and help others by doing so.

It seems impossible and asinine to me that people could despise one another and never know anything about the other person. Personally, I believe that is a very shallow belief, and before anyone can work to remedy racism, we must learn to outgrow that stigma.

I wanted to point to the fact that racism and prejudice most often is caused by the simple point of ignorance. The ignorance is that of some race not caring to know and learn about other races.

First, I want to point out that, yes, it is true that as a black race (as well as other minorities), we have been taught the white culture throughout our days of schooling.

But when I speak of learning and knowing others, I speak of learning about that person as a human being. Just knowing others' views or feelings on certain topics can bring new light to many personal relationships.

Second, I would like to make a suggestion to the white race in dealing with prejudice toward other races. In referring back to learning about others,

Tanya Ovea Williams  
Reader's Opinion

there are a number of courses, programs and seminars offered here that give some insight to the black, Hispanic and Oriental experience.

It is true that people never will get the true experience because they are not of that race, but part of healing our ill is at least taking medicine.

For example, in response to my own with racism, my sister suggested I get my assailant and suggest he take PH 489 (Philosophy of African American) which she is taking now. I not only suggest it to him but to all.

Also it is important for black people alike to take these courses because the majority (including myself) of us are not aware and proficient in our own culture and history.

Everyone learns about the things Martin L. King Jr. and Malcom X did for our race, but our history runs deeper than those two great leaders. It is important to learn more about ourselves so that we can tell others.

This brings me to my next and final point, which is more directed to the black race coming from a black perspective. After learning about our powerful and rich culture, we as a black race (and other races) must be proud and tell others about our heritage. This can be compared to Christianity and other religions.

When Christians learn about God it is their duty to go out and witness to others about His great works. Well, mixed races, you must go and "witness" to other races and let them know how proud you are of your culture, for if you don't respect yourself, you can't expect anyone else to.

In doing this, others are learning about you and it will eventually help them to outgrow that ignorance which causes racism in the first place.

Tanya Ovea Williams is a freshman journalism major.

## MAIL CALL

The Battalion is interested in hearing from its readers and welcomes all letters to the editor. Please include name, classification, address and phone number on all letters. The editor reserves the right to edit letters for style and length. Because of limited space, shorter letters have a better chance of appearing. There is, however, no guarantee letters will appear. Letters may be brought to 216 Reed McDonald or sent to Campus Mail Stop 1111.

### Do the right thing

EDITOR:

I am writing in regard to "the itch" as it appeared in the Feb. 21 paper. I fully recognize that the First Amendment has been sufficiently warped to cover such items and you have every right to continue "the itch."

However, The Battalion, I believe, should be trying to provide Texas A&M with articles and features it wants. I cannot obviously speak for all, but I would greatly prefer for this feature to be cut.

"the itch" is a disgusting comic most of the time, and Feb. 21 was the most revolting thing I have ever seen in this paper.

Please consider all of the opinions you have been receiving, and do the right thing.

Jason T. Day '93

### Vote against cable

EDITOR:

I generally feel the Residential Housing Association (RHA) does a good job representing the average on-campus resident.

After all, they brought back lofts in the Corps-style dorms — not an easy task against the infamously inflexible housing authority.

However, in their latest attempt at making residence hall life "better," the RHA has deemed mandatory cable usage a viable option and, through the Department of Student Affairs, is allowing us to vote on it.

Assuming it passes, this would automatically add more than \$50 to your fee slip over the typical fall-spring-summer periods.

This money goes directly into the pockets of the vultures at TCA Cable.

Now, I don't have a problem with others spending their money on cable. However, I don't even own nor want a TV.

Why should I be forced to pay for the excesses of others? Maybe the Department of Student Affairs should read Jeff Farmer's column about the "merits," or lack thereof, of television before they allow such a vote to be taken. How ethical is it to supply a major means of student distraction?

Cable is not like phone lines, electricity or water. It is in no way academically oriented, and my bill from an academic institution should reflect that.

In this case, the RHA needs to protect the right of the minority. Vote NO for cable.

Stephen Pace '91

Editor's Note: Students who live in residence halls will be allowed to vote for or against cable during April elections.

### Editorial Policy

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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.

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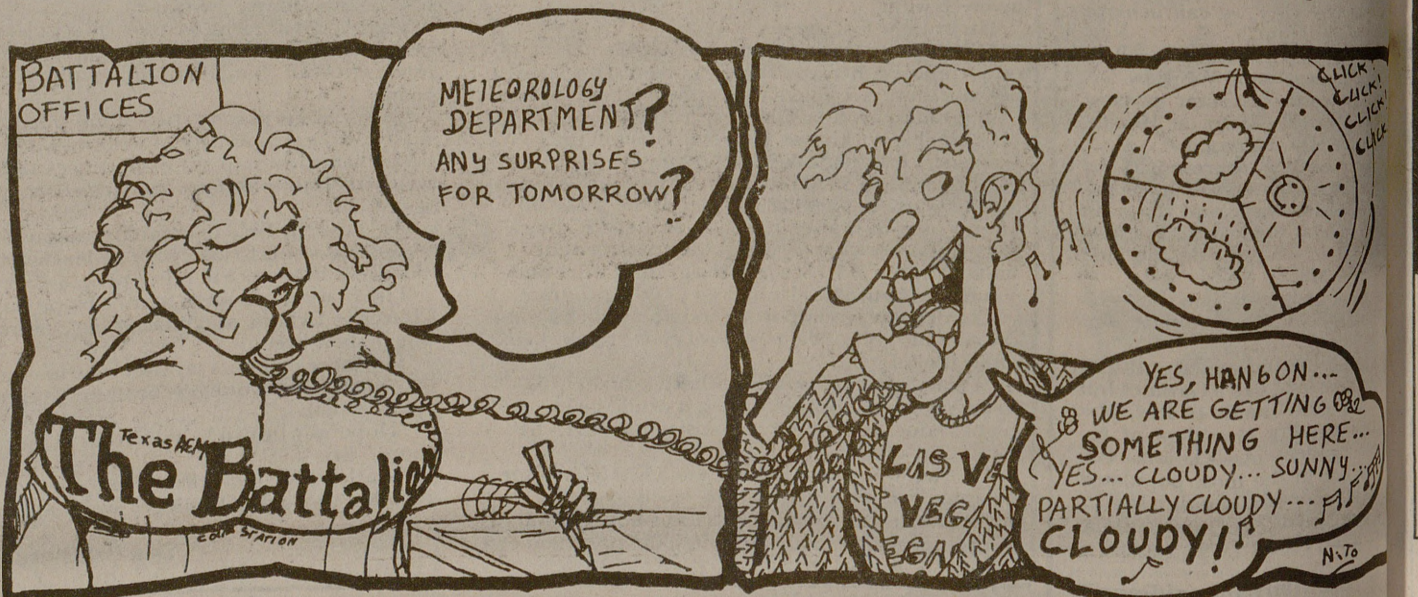
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### the itch



by Nito

### The Battalion

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