

... YOUR AUTOGRAPHED O.J. SIMPSON CARD FOR MY AUTOGRAPHED ROGER STAUBUCH AND TERRY BRADSHAW?

WELL, HE DOES LEAD THE NFL IN ALLEGED DOUBLE HOMICIDES!



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THANX JAMES!

THE BATTALION
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EDITORIAL

RELIGION IN POLITICS

Radical agenda endangers Republican party

The religious right faction of the Republican party has been muscling its way into power over the past several years, and their politics of exclusion may split the GOP.

Conservative Christian activists gained control of the Texas Republican party at the recent state GOP convention by capturing most of the leadership positions within the party, including the chairmanship. Dallas lawyer Tom Pauken, who appealed to Christian activists for their support, says that he won by building a coalition of social and fiscal conservatives. Gay rights opponent and Christian activist Susan Wedington captured the Vice Chairmanship with the full support of the Texas Christian Coalition.

Nationally, Oliver North recently won the Republican nomination for U.S. Senator in Virginia, running on a platform of family values, social conservatism and a promise to bring ethical values into Congress. Prominent television commentator and former presidential candidate Pat Buchanan has called for a cultural war to "win back the soul of the nation." Pat Robertson, known for his strong stance against abortion and homosexuality, built a huge support base after his 1988 run for the presidency.

The religious right has tapped into a major concern of many Americans: the moral and spiritual decline of the nation. These "conservative Christians" see the

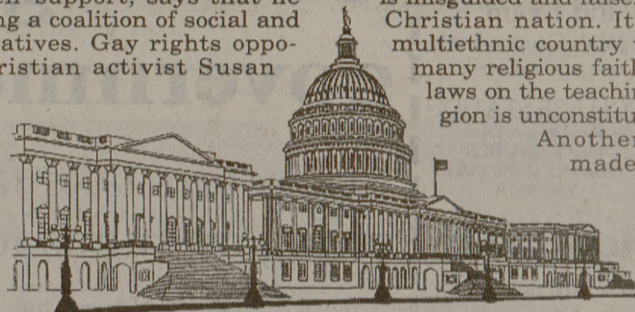
increase of gang violence, teenage pregnancies and a host of other problems as evidence that God is missing from the public dialogue. They plan to "return God to the nation" by reintroducing prayer in public schools, outlawing abortion and opposing homosexual rights.

While they have identified many of the serious problems plaguing American society, the idea that returning to the Christian roots of the nation is the only way to improve the condition of the country is misguided and false. This is not a Christian nation. It is a diverse, multiethnic country with people of many religious faiths. Basing our laws on the teachings of one religion is unconstitutional.

Another mistake made by religious conservatives is the idea that what is immoral should necessarily be illegal.

While there are obviously activities like rape or murder which are both illegal and immoral, they are not one in the same. The purpose of morality is to outline the "best" way for individuals to act. The purpose of the law is to set the minimum behavioral standards which our society requires to function.

If the religious right continues to gain control within the Republican party, their insistence on implementing God's law, as they interpret it, into civil law will fracture the GOP. The way in which mainstream Republicans respond to this growing faction of their party will determine their viability as a major party in upcoming elections.



Political parties obscure true issues

Democrats, Republicans don't represent all members' political viewpoints

When my father attended the Texas Republican convention in 1968, he tells me, they had speeches from all the Republican statewide office holders. It only took about two hours to hear them all. This year, they didn't even get through the legislators.

In the 1960s, the election that everyone worried about in the South was not the general one, but the Democratic Party primary. It was liberal Democrats versus conservative Democrats.

Things are much different now. Most Democrats tend to be more liberal and most Republicans, conservative. It makes voting much simpler, doesn't it?

I don't know. Many Republicans believe in a woman's right to an abortion, whereas the party platform is usually pro-life. There are also many Democrats who are against gun control, whereas most such legislation is promoted by their party.

The simple fact is, there is not only left and right, but also various gradations of the two. There are Libertarians, moderate Democrats, liberal businessmen and tree-hugging Nazis. OK, so those are unusual extremes, but you get my point. Also, someone who is morally conservative may also be for big government, and visa-versa. Generalizations like "Republican" and "Democrat" are really false labels that usually apply, but not in all cases.

So often one hears, "I'm a Republican, but ..." or, "I'm a Democrat, but ..." Are only two labels capable of distinguishing all political viewpoints?

That's like saying you are either white or non-white. I know most members of racial minorities would be against that.

In the same way, many Americans feel pigeonholed in two political groups. Should we then have a system based on a wide range of parties? If so, then surely none of them can have a majority without a coalition. That's how Hitler rose to power. No one group could rise to stop the Nazis.

Then why don't we just abolish all political parties? I'm firm in my beliefs, but often find myself voting by party when I don't know either of the candidates. And no one votes for third-party candidates, because no one takes them seriously. Many people vote for people like Dan Rostenkowski and

JAMES BERNSEN

Guest Columnist



Oliver North — who may or may not be guilty — saying, "I'd rather have a crook who believes in my values than a virtuous man or woman who doesn't."

Some people vote solely on the basis of party. "I'd vote for a yellow dog if the party nominated one." "The Republican party is the party of Lincoln." Or, as they said in the post-Civil War era, "Vote the way you shot." At the least, straight-ticket voting should be stopped.

If someone really believes in all their party's candidates, they can spend the time to go down the row and check every one.

But in reality, the Republicans are no longer the party of Lincoln, and those who say George Washington was a Democrat are dead wrong. What were perhaps once-clear boundaries are now hazy lines.

The two political parties (and all third parties) exist for one reason: to get people elected. Once they get in office, politicians often don't vote by values, they vote for whatever keeps that Senate seat in their party.

And once people who are elected to the legislatures get there, there's too much of an "Us-versus-Them" attitude. The Constitution was framed through compromise, not through block voting and gridlock.

Perhaps if we abolished all parties we could force candidates to campaign only on the basis of their ideas and beliefs. Then conservative Republicans wouldn't get stuck with liberal Republicans, and vice-versa.

Naturally some changes would have to be made to ensure a run-off of the top candidates, in case one does not receive a majority. I will never accept a president, for example, who only garnered 40 percent of the vote. That means to me that 60 percent of Americans don't like him.

Political parties serve useful functions in terms of fund raising and organization, but is there really no better way?

The goal of democracy is to let all sides have an equal say, so the truth may emerge. Parties are blinders which, sometimes maliciously, obscure this truth.

James Bernsen is a senior German and journalism major

Perhaps if we abolished all political parties we could force candidates to campaign only on the basis of their ideas and beliefs.

JOSEF ELCHANAN

Columnist



foreign powers who have no concept of democracy. The United States once was much different. We fought a Civil War to decide the fate of this country. American soldiers were sent around the world

multicultural society. If we didn't make faulty judgments, that would simply mean that we had not tried hard enough to improve our society and nation. The world needs us to be leaders, not a whimpering and segregated mass of complaining hordes ...

It was not surprising at all how quickly the modern American youth can be enraged to burn cities and regularly shoot their fellow citizens for some money and a pair of shoes. The same rage landed on the beaches of Normandy and Okinawa. It built the huge American industries of the early 20th century. Pioneers used this rage to push themselves across the great American frontier. The early colonists, tired of being pushed around by foreign dictators, fought back with muskets and broadswords. Americans' rage condemned injustice and servitude and fed on the belief that people should be able to determine their own destinies without stepping on others through education and grand accomplishments.

Rage created this country. Deep down in every American is that rage, that defiant furnace that burns every time we are pushed around by someone else. Our political representatives are used to selling out, of taking the easy path. That's their job, to do as they are told by us. Americans, on the other hand, must defend their country against those of lesser destinies. We have few allies in this endeavor. And we have many opponents.

Sporting events and talk shows will not quench the fire of revolution that men like Jefferson and Franklin lit so many decades ago. Our representatives shaking hands with foreign criminals will certainly not calm us. America needs leaders who will focus the best in our souls, not those who skim off the dark recesses of humanity for profit. It is important for us to look at ourselves and our surrounding world and decide if we can do more than sue each other and create service industries, and whether we can create good and honest works that will help humanity. Such decisions are ours alone.

Josef Elchanan is a senior business management major



MARGULIES
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NEW JERSEY

Americans forget cultural rage, ignore dishonor

I remember this event vividly. I can still taste the utter hate that filled my mind. The body of a U.S. Marine colonel was hanging from the roof of some building in Lebanon. Why was he not avenged?

And whatever happened to the people responsible for blowing-up the Marine barracks in Beirut? Is it surprising to anyone that we immediately invaded Grenada instead of going after the people who killed our American servicemen?

Why were male servicemen required to remove their American flags from their uniforms and why were female military personnel ordered to wear native garments, instead of the uniforms they had earned, while defending the Saudi Arabian people?

Why did the government allow 18 U.S. Rangers to die, without retaliation, in Somalia?

Why is Japan still placing unfair tariffs on American goods while we import from them on a fair basis?

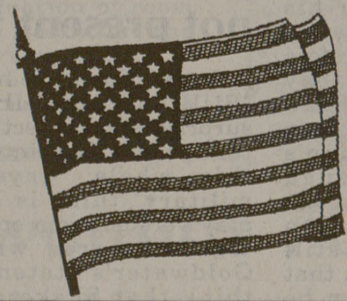
Why did we back-off from Haiti, and why were we there in the first place?

Why are we allowing the world community to push us around about our policies in Rwanda and North Korea?

Why would we even think of opening relations with Vietnam, especially with so many POW's still unaccounted for?

It seems that we are a superpower of appeasement, not of action.

Our leaders are so busy making everyone feel comfortable that they have forgotten that their jobs are to take care of their constituencies, not to see the other guys' side. They continue to take the easy road out. They reason, and rightly so, that Americans will forget about the dishonors heaped upon our country's name, that we cannot keep up with everything going on, especially if we are fed disinformation.



The American soul suffers from Americans' characteristic of feeling responsible for their own misjudgments. The problem emerges when we allow the guilt of those mistakes to stop us from taking necessary actions.

during the Spanish-American War to defend American pride. Our original fight with the British over the destiny of the New World was fought more out of stubbornness than from truly horrible circumstances. America does not have the most untarnished history, but then again, what country does? What country did not use some form of slavery and fight wars? What country did not make policy errors or suffer from indecision?

But this country's soul suffers from Americans' characteristic of feeling responsible for their own misjudgments. The problem emerges when we allow the guilt of those mistakes to stop us from taking necessary actions. We are, after all, the first of the modern democratic republics and the first

MAIL CALL

Students need to grow up

This is an open letter to Dr. Daniel Sui's Geography 301 class. Large numbers of people in this class consistently waste the time of the rest of the class bickering and whining to the professor. We would like first and foremost to say, "Grow up!" This is a junior level course. Many people taking the course feel a need to be spoon-fed everything. The average on the first quiz was 80, and the average on the first exam was 78. People who think these are too low should try taking a course from the Science or Engineering departments. We're tired of hearing people rip on the prof and waste our time because they can't take a little responsibility for themselves. If these people would take a little responsibility and put forth just a little bit of effort, they would have understood instantly. Stop wasting our time when we're willing to put forth an effort and learn.

Finally, we would like to apologize to Dr. Sui for those students who wish to take advantage of his willingness to talk with students. We appreciate the effort he puts into making the class interesting and easy to follow.

Bob Ierien
Class of '96

Accompanied by five signatures

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