

Letters

Fight tuition hikes

It was no accident that the State Board of Higher Education held the public hearing on the dormitory rate hike during Spring break! They have pulled the same "trick" several times in the past. Last year they voted through a tuition hike during the break, when no one was around. Those "jokers" also like to get together in Bend, far from any major university, when students are angry.

The State Board is not just a bunch of jokers. They lie to us about not "liking" to raise costs and then vote unanimously in favor of the increases, for good reason. They, the Legislature, and the Governor serve the interests of the small handful of rich capitalists that own and run this country. The economic crisis forces them to cut back more than usual at the things that don't profit them directly. They want us, our parents, and other working people to sacrifice to help them out of their crisis.

The legislature will get its chance with the axe too. They will study the expert's proposals on how to cut the most with the least resistance. President Boyd's professional mathematician is going after the School of Community Service and Public Affairs (to be cut in half), the library (cataloging by subject), faculty salaries (especially summer), and more, to make up for a million dollar deficit from declining enrollments (those already priced out). Different rates of tuition hikes and severity of cuts are planned to get students in different fields and levels to blame each other.

Are we going to let them divide (and conquer) us — pit grads against under-grads, CSPA against other programs, etc.? Or — are we going to unite and organize ourselves to fight back against all of their attacks?

Students at Portland State Uni-

versity have already started to get organized to fight this latest round of attacks on our education. In late April or early May the governor's proposal will go to the legislature. We've got to start now to build the kind of state-wide movement that will take them on every step of the way! The Revolutionary Student Brigade calls on all students who want to build this fight to come to a meeting Friday, April 8 at 3:30 in the EMU. Fight the tuition hike and cutbacks!

John Kaiser
Revolutionary Student Brigade

Coverage clarified

It was good to see the Emerald's coverage of the Northwest Conference on the International Situation, War, Revolution and the Internationalist Tasks of the American People (Emerald, April 5.) The Conference brought together a large number of people from throughout the Northwest, including more than 100 from Eugene, for discussion and struggle around what are life-and-death questions for the American people.

However, we in the Revolutionary Student Brigade feel that it is important to clarify several points contained in your coverage. First, the Conference was organized and sponsored by a number of organizations and individuals from this area and was not "the Revolutionary Communist Party's Conference." In fact, there were a total of 58 sponsors from the Northwest, and the Conference organizing committees included representatives from a number of these organizations. Further, the nearly 500 people who attended were also part of the Conference.

Second, those of us in the RSB do not feel that the internationalist tasks of the American people "center around the role of the Soviet Union." While we oppose both superpowers (the U.S. and USSR), their actions around the world and their growing moves toward war, our internationalist

tasks here center around opposition to aggression and intervention by the rulers of this country and building active solidarity with the struggles of people around the world for national liberation and independence. The role of the Soviet Union in the world (which we see as driven by the same laws of capitalism as the U.S.) is nonetheless a vital issue for us to come to understand, particularly as the world moves closer and closer to war between the superpowers.

And finally, we certainly don't wish that we "had never heard of Angola." Tens of thousands of Angolans died in a civil war in that country that developed from the growing contention between the U.S. and the USSR. That civil war was not in the interests of the Angolan people. However, we do not pretend that it never occurred, and in fact feel that it is important for us to understand what happened there and the lessons we can

learn from it.

We feel that the Conference played an important role in clarifying and sharpening the debate and discussion around these and other issues — and that it is essential that this debate and discussion of events around the world, and what we should and must do in relation to them, now continue and deepen.

Sue Jacobs-Szymanski
for the Revolutionary Student Brigade

The Emerald stands by its reporting. — ed.

Ridiculous waste

It is ridiculous that we should use water to carry away our body wastes. It is as if we were excreting in the river from the privacy of our own homes. Treatment plants are only partially effective and costs are prohibitive. When will we

wake up and investigate the natural process of decomposition to see if there lies an answer to the question "what do I do with my body wastes?"

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Letters policy

The Emerald will accept and try to print all letters containing fair comment on ideas and topics of concern or interest to the University community. Because of space limitations, letters must be no more than 250 words, typed, triple-spaced, dated and signed with the person's major. No unsigned letters will be published. Longer opinion columns will be published whenever possible after being submitted to the editorial page editor. The limit on opinion columns is 800 words, using the same format as letters.



Duck Soup



"I acquired the egg laying ability through cosmic awareness."

opinion

Too many journalists, or not enough journalism?

As someone who has been a newspaper reporter and has done research on the newspaper industry, I can only agree with Neal Hoffman's diagnosis (ODE, April 4) of the job market situation in journalism today.

I strongly disagree, however, with Hoffman's conclusions about what to do. His answer: trade in your pencil, notepad, typewriter and illusions; drop out of journalism school; find yourself another line of work.

Where, may I ask? Teaching? Law? Social work? Engineering? Factory work? Sales and clerical work? Jobs aren't exactly going begging in any of these areas.

Journalism is a noble profession. Explaining the complex world to people is a worthwhile way to spend one's time and earn one's living. But unfortunately, journalists don't control journalism. Publishers do.

Aggressive journalism, where it exists at all, is found on the large dailies that have the financial resources to dig behind the surface. But the number of city newspapers has declined dramatically during this century, especially in the past decade and a half. In 1890, New York City had 15 English-language dailies. In 1960 it still had seven dailies. Today it has three. The trend is similar in other large and medium-sized cities, such as Los Angeles, Chicago, Boston, Philadelphia, Rochester, Portland, Columbus, Pittsburgh and Cleveland.

Indeed, America is increasingly becoming a nation of one-newspaper cities. In 1900 61.1 per cent of our cities had competing dailies, falling to 20.6 per cent by 1930, 4.2 per cent in 1961, and 2.4 per cent in 1971.

The newspaper industry claims that the total number of dailies has not declined. True enough. The number has remained stable at about 1,750 since 1945. This is because while publishers have been folding and merging their big city newspapers, papers in suburbs have mushroomed along with the urban sprawl of the post-war period. But these papers hire few reporters or editors; they depend on local advertising so that they shy away from aggressive reporting; and their pages are mostly padded with rewritten press releases, gossip and fluff.

The reason for this trend is that when large pub-

lishers, particularly chain owners, buy locally-owned city papers, they often first merge the circulation, advertising and printing departments, and then merge the editorial departments, citing declining circulation or advertising revenues. Printers, ad salespersons, circulation drivers and reporters lose jobs while chains reinvest profits in the more profitable suburban "growth sector."

Indeed, the newspaper business is beginning to catch up with other industries in terms of ownership concentration. In 1960, the 25 biggest newspaper chains controlled 38 per cent of all daily newspaper circulation. In 1976, the 25 largest chains had 52 per cent, and the 12 largest chains account for 38 per cent. As press analyst Ben Bagdikian recently wrote in the Columbia Journalism Review, "never before has so much been under the control of so few."

This trend — toward fewer city papers and thus fewer journalism jobs — is not "inevitable;" some kind of natural law of economics. It is the product of two connected facts.

First, newspapers are published for profit and publishers invest where the money is. Although some publishers take a strong interest in the news content of their papers, they are all ultimately concerned with the bottom line. Few crusading owners are willing to hold onto a losing newspaper just to get their views across.

Second, the government's laws and activities make possible the increasing concentration of newspaper ownership that leads to fewer city papers.

Certainly there are other reasons for these trends, such as the accelerating cost of newspaper technology and the failure of circulation to keep up with population growth. But in many ways the publishers and the government by following the logic of profit have contributed to the decline of newspaper diversity.

What alternatives exist?

We should be wary of any government-owned or subsidized press. Not only does it violate the First Amendment, but in our society where the government generally serves the interests of the privileged, it might even hamstring the occasionally aggressive newspaper

that exposes CIA shenanigans abroad, prints the Pentagon Papers (which the Nixon administration tried to suppress), or exposes other government wrongdoing.

We should consider two ideas that in recent years offer some guidelines for solving the problem of fewer jobs for j-school grads and, in turn, the larger problem of ensuring an aggressive and democratic press.

Throughout the country journalists have begun to demand a voice in determining their paper's editorial and news policies. The "newsroom democracy" movements parallels trends in other industries for more worker participation and economic democracy that goes beyond profit-sharing plans or labor-management encounter groups. At Paris' prestigious Le Monde, the journalists' organization owns and runs the paper. It is therefore not at all romantic to suggest that daily papers can be run by the people that produce them.

A second idea is the "community press council" that meets to hear and investigate complaints about unfair or incomplete news coverage. Unfortunately most of these experiments have only developed in small towns and the newspapers' cooperation is voluntary. The idea of a democratically-elected press council to monitor the performance of the press seems a good one. Among other things, we could envision a press council having the power to veto the sale of a local paper to an outside chain or the folding of a local newspaper by a profit-oriented publisher.

That college j-schools continue to grind out graduates while publishers decrease the number of job openings ought to make us think about planning our economy in a democratic way that matches the skills of our people with the needs of our society. That publishers have a right to do so, claiming their First Amendment rights, reminds us of press critic A.J. Liebling's observation that "freedom of the press is guaranteed only to those who own one." Or today, two, three, or more.

Peter Dreier
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Friday, April 8, 1977