

Administration needs vandals' spray-paint

Campus artists had their spray-paint cans aimed in the wrong direction last week and several University walls now wear poorly crafted slogans about Iran to prove it. Where should that ugly, orange paint have been sprayed?

Several weeks ago, we strongly urged the administration and the campus transportation sub-committee to provide funds for bike lanes on campus. Most specifically, we pointed out the dangerous mix of bicyclists and pedestrians who make their way through campus along 13th Avenue every day. More than one collision has already occurred between Kincaid and University Streets, due to this congestion and confusion.

Action to alleviate this chaotic situation is long overdue and, because of the minimal cost

involved, it is puzzling and disturbing that something has not been done about it.

It is also disturbing that vandals seem to have a free hand in defacing University property and we urge all students and staff to stop anyone they see doing it, or to call campus security if direct action

ours

seems inappropriate. One way or another, there seems little doubt that all members of the campus community would enjoy seeing these vandals out there scrubbing the walls — and literally eating their own words.

Such poetic justice is probably unlikely —

even if the rogues are caught with spray can in hand. Legal loopholes and bureaucracy often prevent a victim from obtaining just compensation for losses incurred, whether the case involves assault, robbery or vandalism.

Bureaucracy is also responsible for the lack of campus bike lanes that, if funded and painted, would do justice to pedestrians and bicyclists alike. But, to accomplish this, the administration and the University's transportation sub-committee must take the red tape in hand and chop through it.

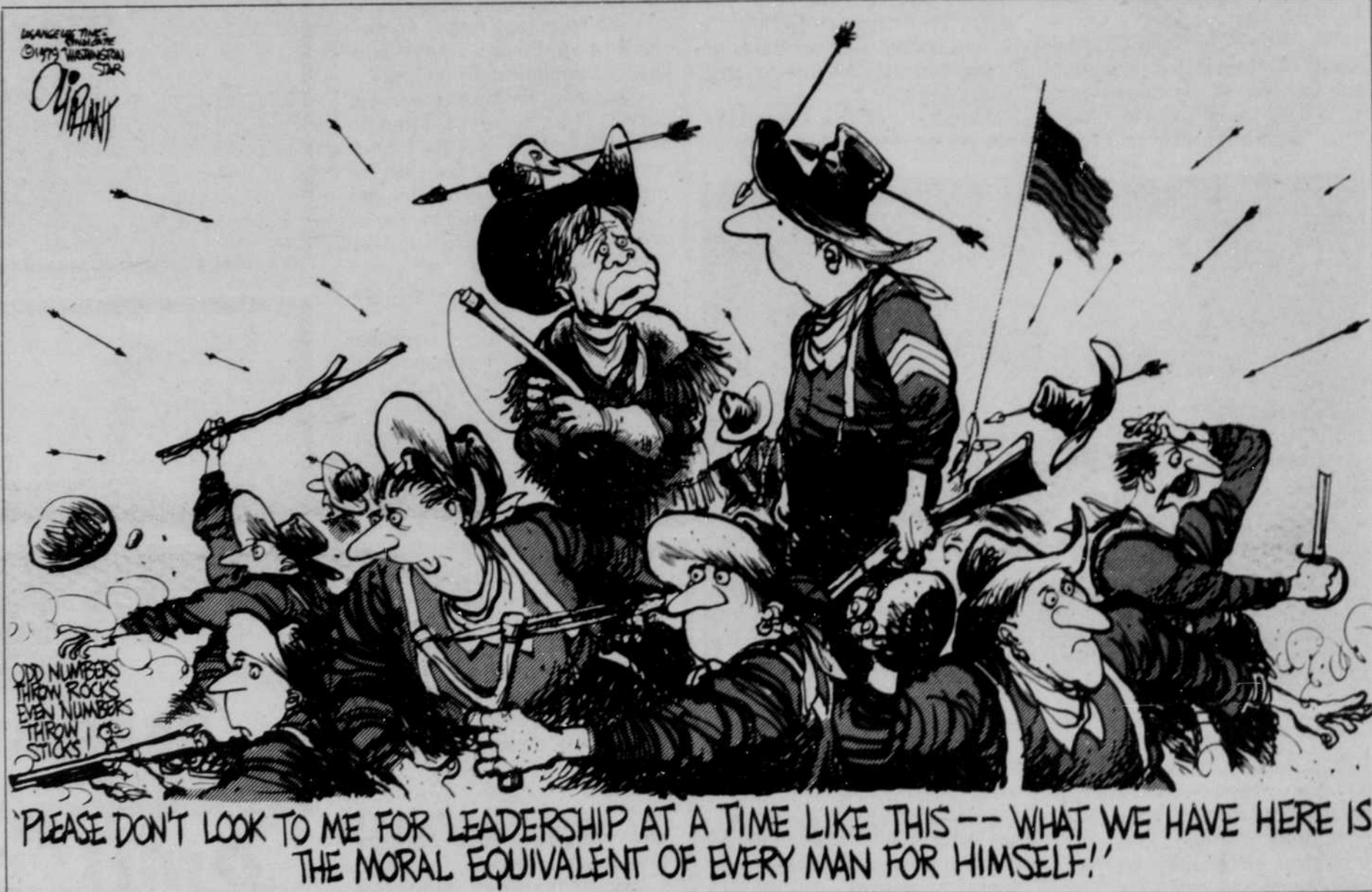
The vandals' bright orange paint and the time it took to spray it all over campus buildings could have been put to much better use, but the bike lanes would probably look better in white anyway.

yours

Policy debate

As Professor Wixman's defense of U.S. policy in Iran at the Nov. 20th debate gives testimony, what is at stake in the debate between him (with Professor Reynolds) and myself is far more fundamental than the number of political prisoners in the Soviet Union. What is at issue is whether or not U.S. intervention in Third World countries and support of unpopular dictatorships, such as Pinochet in Chile and the shah in Iran, is justified because they are anti-communist. If Soviet "totalitarianism" can be documented to be qualitatively more repressive than U.S. client states in the Third World, military interventions such as those in Vietnam and in the Dominican Republic in 1965, and C.I.A. sponsored coups such as that which put the shah back in power in 1953 are justified because they prevent much harsher communist regimes. If, however, socialist regimes can be shown to be much less repressive than U.S. installed and backed dictatorships that justify themselves in the name of anti-communism and defense of "freedom," then the ideology which justifies U.S. intervention ("freedom") is exposed as a cover for the insurance of enormous corporate profits obtained from exploiting cheap Third World labor, gaining guaranteed access to cheap raw materials and securing markets for the exports of the giant U.S. corporations.

Over the last two years, the American people have been subject to a rising crescendo of anti-Soviet hysteria in the media (of which the Wixman-Reynolds letter is a part) about dissidents, defectors, boat people, troops in Cuba, etc. It appears that all this has far more to do with preparing the American people to once again readily support Vietnam and Dominican Republic type interventions (in the name of preserving "freedom") than it has to do with anything the Soviets have been doing. The recent Iranian crisis, precipitated by hardliners in the U.S. government working with Kissinger and David Rockefeller to bring the shah to the U.S. (part of the policy phrased by Kissinger as "rewarding our friends and punishing our enemies"), appears to be succeeding in turning Americans back to where they were before Vietnam. If the Wixman-Reynolds "guess" that



there are about 10,000 political prisoners (broadly defined) in the Soviet Union is correct, then the rate of incarceration in Uruguay is fifty times that of the Soviet Union, the rate of dissidents being killed without trial in Guatemala in the last 15 years is 250 times that of those merely incarcerated in the Soviet Union and the rate of killing by Savak and the shah's army is 50 times those incarcerated in the Soviet Union. Similar figures could be repeated for a considerable number of U.S. supported military dictatorships that exist in the name of "freedom" and anti-communism.

However, the Wixman-Reynolds, self-admitted "guess" is no more than the inflated estimate of those that have every reason to exaggerate the extent of political repression in the Soviet Union. The most careful empirical use of psychiatric hospitals to incarcerate dissidents in the Soviet Union ("Psychic Terror," by Block and Reddaway) reports 210 documented cases of the use of mental hospitals between 1962 and 1976 (55 percent sociopolitical, 13 percent religious, 7 percent nationalist and 20 percent for attempting to or agitat-

ing for emigration). The same source reports a total of 600 documented cases of incarceration in labor camps during the same period. That the 800 (about 50 a year) documented cases represent a large proportion of total incarcerations is evidenced by the fact that no one is incarcerated without a trial and that the dissident network is rather effective in monitoring trial proceedings and garnering reports from prisoners about others who are incarcerated with them. This material is systematically reported in the dissident publication, "The Chronicle of Current Events," republished in the West by Amnesty International.

A.I. concentrated a disproportionate amount of energy on gaining publicity for prisoners in Eastern Europe (its branches try to balance adopted prisoners East and West). It thus makes every effort to "adopt" all those suspected of being political prisoners in the Soviet Union. Its total of "adopted prisoners of conscience," which has pretty much remained constant at between 300 and 350 for some time, thus seems to represent the maximum estimate of documentable

cases of dissident incarceration (of all categories). The A.I. figure is validated by its correspondence to the Block-Reddaway estimate.

As for torture in the Soviet Union, the 1974 A.I. Report on Torture concludes "though prison conditions and the rights of prisoners detained on political charges in Eastern Europe and the Soviet Union may still be in many cases unsatisfactory, torture as a government-sanctioned, Stalinist practice has ceased. With a few exceptions, no reports on the use of torture in Eastern Europe have been reaching the outside world in the past decade." This is in very sharp contrast with the U.S. trained Savak's systematic use of torture and execution of perhaps 10,000 dissidents in Iran in the last twenty years, to say nothing of the execution of thousands and thousands of dissidents throughout Latin America, many after protracted torture. A.I.'s annual report for 1975-76 notes that "more than 80 percent of the urgent appeals and actions for victims of human torture have been coming from Latin America."

It is clear that the U.S. client states of Asia and Latin America

are in balance far more repressive than are socialist countries such as the Soviet Union, and thus that U.S. military intervention to prevent the growth of socialism through setting up military dictatorships, such as those of Pinochet and the shah, is based on a lie. I welcome the opportunity to debate the professors on either side of the question of political repression East and West, the nature of Soviet Socialism or the role of U.S. intervention in the Third World.

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associate professor, sociology

Parking use

I wish to correct one statement in your story of Nov. 20, 1979, concerning the provision of parking across the millrace. The space is not being used by visitors as your article indicates, but by faculty or staff, most of whom work in Oregon Hall. The purpose of encouraging the use of that formerly deserted area is to make convenient parking spaces accessible to visitors to the campus.

William Boyd
University president
Thursday, November 29, 1979