

A change of face for high school papers

The days when the front page of a high school newspaper was devoted to stories of student body elections, homecoming royalty and cafeteria food fights are taking their place alongside miniskirts and hula hoops.

Today, high school newspapers carry stories on rape, pornography and the rise in teenage alcoholism.

However, the trend toward reporting on social problems by high school journalists is overshadowed by yet another problem—arbitrary censorship.

Censorship is not an uncommon problem in the American high school press. For instance, in Fairfax County, Virginia, two high school editors took the school board and the high school principal to court for refusing to allow them to print a story dealing with the fact that several of their classmates were sexually active but did not use any form of birth control.

Then there was the high school in Texas that had problems recruiting a staff because the principal was allowed to read, approve and change, at his discretion, any story written by a student before it was printed in the paper.

Closer to home, a high school

journalism advisor in Bremerton discovered, after it was printed, an article inviting students to write in to the editor concerning their views of homosexuality. As a result, he refused to allow the approximately 2,000 copies of the paper to be distributed.

The good ship Censor can have any one of several persons at the helm—the school district superintendent, the principal or the advisor.

The reasons given by each are also varied—the principal is afraid of community reaction over a story on venereal disease, the advisor is afraid of losing his job over a story on drugs, and the superintendent is afraid of losing the levy over a story on abortion.

These reasons hold very little merit, if one remembers that the primary purpose of a newspaper is to inform the general public—not to pass levies, not to maintain good public relations and not to preserve paychecks.

Stories printed in a high school newspaper should be edited by the staff, with the guidance of a trained advisor, for matters of libel, obscenity and poor taste—period.

To censor a high school journalist simply because he or she is ambitious enough to tackle a story the magnitude of, say, one on pornography, just because the principal is afraid of community repercussions defeats the primary purpose of a newspaper—to inform. This includes a high school newspaper.

If high school students do not find out about the dangers of venereal disease, or about methods of birth control at home, then the next safest source of information could be the high school press.

Instead of beating down student journalists, administrators and teachers should be encouraging student efforts to go beyond the cloistered news environment of high school pep rallies to venture out into the "real" issues that make up the "real" world in which they will some day have to live.

All of the above is written under the assumption that such stories are accurate, factual, in good taste, free of libel and obscenity. This can be accomplished with the help of a competent and well-trained advisor—of which there are precious few.

A common joke among many high

schools is that the last one through the door gets the newspaper. Meaning of course, that the last teacher hired, whether he or she is a journalism teacher or chemistry instructor, who doesn't know the First Amendment from a pica pole, gets to advise the newspaper staff.

This is a blatant travesty, on par with allowing the corner butcher to take out your appendix.

If more journalism teachers were required to hold a degree in journalism and to have some professional newspaper experience, there would be fewer problems with what students could and could not print.

With experience and a degree, an advisor would know journalism practices and be able to communicate them to his or her students who, in turn, would transfer them to the pages of the newspaper in the form of sound, professional reporting.

And with a qualified advisor on the staff, principals, superintendents and school boards could go back to worrying about truant students, dress codes and levies and leave the journalism to the journalists.

—ann sims

Your views

Regents

Tomorrow morning, at 9:00 a.m., the Board of Regents of Washington State University will be dealing with several issues that will have considerable impact on you as a student.

The first will be the question of distribution for the \$6.00 increase in student Services & Activities (S & A) Fees which each of us pays each year. The S & A Fees Committee has recommended \$3.50 be allocated to ASWSU and \$2.50 be allocated to Women's Intercollegiate Athletics. The Committee had considerable difficulty coming up with a decision as several other groups, including the Marching Band and Day Care for children of WSU students, requested money.

It seems as though several members of the Committee feel Day Care is very much needed but were concerned whether the \$22,500 requested was fair, considering the number of students it would affect, or whether student government should be the only group involved in funding Day Care. In any event, the board will be making this decision Friday and if you have a concern, I ask that you attend and give your input.

The second item the board will discuss, is the question of whether the bookstore should give a \$30,000 dividend to ASWSU or that money should be given back to the students through an increase in the point of sale discount on textbooks. ASWSU as well as the Bookstore Board have endorsed the \$30,000 dividend to improve programming by the many committees ASWSU supports. Many people feel the

discount is where the money should go, and that this is the only way all students will be affected by the money. Again, this is a controversial issue and will require much discussion.

Along this same line, the board will also be deciding on the question of whether the bookstore needs to expand. This expansion has also been endorsed by both the Bookstore Board and ASWSU. If you as a student at WSU have any feelings about any of these issues, I encourage you to please attend. Greg King, ASWSU vice president, and myself will be in CUB B-11 tonight at 7:30 p.m. to listen to your concerns and to answer any of your questions about these issues.

I hope that you will attend both tonight's meeting and tomorrow's Regents' meeting (in the Regency Room of the CUB). Your input is desired.

Mark Ufkes
ASWSU President

Response

Realities:

Mr. Omar's letter, "Response", opens with the statement: "Was Hitler a Palestinian?" Whereas the answer to this rhetorical question is clear, one cannot but be horrified by the activities of the Palestinian terrorist groups whose major field successes are the hijacking of planes (Entebbe), the shelling of civilian settlements in Israel (Kiryat-shoma and Naharya), the killing of athletes (Munich Olympics), and the murder of school-children (Maalot).

It should be remembered that those Palestinians who fled in 1948 from the newly formed state of Israel, were exhorted to do so by the Arab leaders of the neighboring countries who promised them a triumphant return to their homes after the defeat of Israel.

They have never ceased to believe in the destruction of Israel and the Covenant of the Palestinian Liberation Organization states this in very clear terms. Should we therefore sympathize with these aspirations and satisfy those who want to "drive the Jews into the sea" or, at best, return them to their original countries such as Syria and Iraq, which persecute the remnants of their once-flourishing Jewish communities?

Must every suffering be alleviated by causing another? The Palestinian refusal to accept the state of Israel and their continuous efforts to harass peaceful civilians are bound to perpetuate this decades-long conflict.

There is no doubt, when reading Mr. Omar's letters, that not even the West Bank would provide enough space for the Palestinians and that they are planning to expel a large part of the Israeli population (the ones "not born on the land") in order to provide the space that "belongs to us".

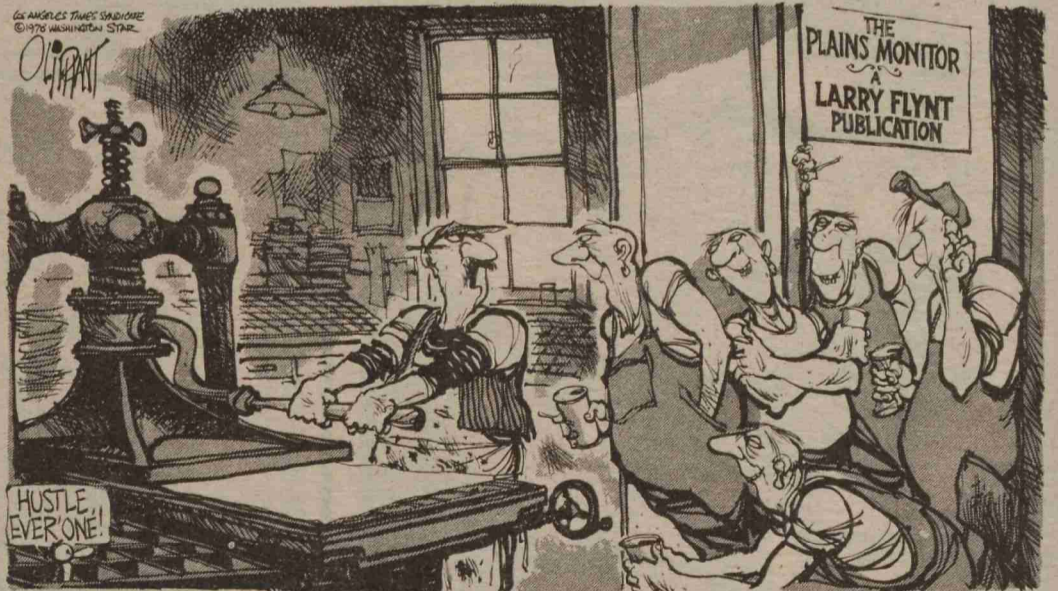
For those Israelis who would pass Mr. Omar's "selection criteria" a non-sectarian democratic state is offered, where "Jew, Christian, Moslem can live and worship with equal rights and equal justice". One

would like to know which is the model for such an ideal state?

Should one be reminded that Lebanon, and Arab Christian-Moslem state, has been torn to pieces in wars in which Palestinians have sided with their Moslem brothers against their Christian brothers? Should one hope for a democratic state similar in character to the repressive regimes in Iraq, Libya or Algeria, which are the most fervent supporters of the Palestinian terrorists?

It is high time for public opinion to realize that behind the rhetorical arguments of the Palestinian terrorists for the restoration of justice and rightful claims, there stands but the desire to destroy Israel and to do away with its Jewish population.

Moshe Werber



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