

One Person's Opinion



U.S. paratroopers provide the enemy with the maximum opportunity to give his life for his country.

But . . . Poland

by John Boyer

Three years ago, while politely chatting about "The Mafia" with a Media lawyer at a friends house, I heard this man make an interesting analogy. While making effective use of his hands and facial expressions, he told me in a raspy voice, that was somewhat more intense than it had been, "you know organized crime in America and communism in Eastern Europe are both very much like the most horrible case of cancer." I gave him an emphatic "yes," though now I'm not sure that it wasn't just to prove to him that I too had read *The Godfather*. He didn't explain his argument any further, so, not being eager to make an ignoramus of myself, I decided not to press him for an explanation.

About a month later, I recalled what he said, thinking about how strange it was that he didn't want to indoctrinate me about his entire philosophy of politics. It occurred to me that I really didn't understand what he meant - was it that both organized crime and communism were growing slowly but surely or was it that both constricted people's freedom and civil rights by means of intimidation? I chose the latter and forgot about it.

Martial law, put into effect some eight weeks ago made me once again think of that situation with the attorney in that

Lenni kitchen. Having relived that entire discussion, cursing myself for not pressing the man any further, I eventually began to think about communism in Eastern Europe and about how pointless it was to impose economic sanctions against Poland. All the newspapers' arguments flooded into my head at once - we're hurting companies like Caterpillar and John Deere much more than we're punishing the Soviet Union. The Polish people are also taking significant portion of the brunt of our sanctions.

Political symbols, like boycotting grain or the Olympic Games, had limited success in our past. Western banks would have more difficulty getting back the money that they loaned to the Poles . . . After thinking about all these adverse effects of the sanctions, it occurred to me that the list was not exhaustive. There was a more subtle, perhaps unconscious, reason for the sanctions' existence. (A saying of a famous political science instructor at this campus will be necessary here.) After "the fertilizer had hit the oscillator" in Poland, the Polish government implemented an automatic pilot in the form of martial law to prevent the fan from breaking down again. The United States, on the other hand, continues to feed fertilizer into it, rather than helping the Polish people to throw off the yoke of the automatic pilot (martial law).

Unrealistically, and perhaps even wishfully, our foreign policy implies that if we can stop the fan completely then Poland may be pulled into the Western Alliance. This, however, will never happen. The Red fan-fixing Army will march into Poland, rejuvenate the automatic pilot, and return safely home suffering minimal casualties. If worse comes to worse, the Polish government can get more electricity from the U.S.S.R. in the form of monetary funds.

My analogy of the Polish crisis is not intended to make light of a serious situation, rather it is to make clear the utter absurdity of our economic sanctions on the Polish government. Whether subtle or brazen, conscious or unconscious, real or imagined, the reasons and effects of our sanctions are faulty. Instead of looking at the Polish crisis as strictly political, perhaps this country should take a more humanistic look at Polish lives. It is doubtful that the Poles themselves are any better off as a result of candles in American windows or economic sanctions. We should at least continue to encourage relief shipments of food to Poland. Then, the Poles would have only one adversary - their own government. After all, cancer can't be cured by spreading fertilizer on its victims; it can be made less painful by pumping in new blood.

Is This The Real Army?

by Jim Moore

In room AA-2 there are quite a few interesting posters depicting the virtues of life in the military. Okay, that's all nice and fine. Nobody is disputing the possibility that military life is fulfilling and enjoyable. However, there is one poster in that particular room that is slightly disturbing. This poster shows us Sgt. Shaw (with a rather menacing countenance) toting a machine gun. Well, we can say that there is nothing wrong with displaying the ruggedness of our fighting forces, but the caption that goes with the poster is rather frightening. It reads like this, "Paratroopers give the enemy the maximum opportunity to give his life for his country." On first reading, that little ditty may not sound altogether that dangerous, but then you begin to wonder what sort of man the military is attempting to recruit. Is the Army after a truly motivated citizen who desires to defend the country in times of war, but who hopes to keep the peace? Or is the Army after people who are merely interested in the killing side of the business? You can say that is the major function of the military, but it is supposed to be connected to a love of the coun-

try, and a spirit of common unity if threatened. This poster simply glorifies killing, with no regard to patriotism or fulfillment in the military. It appeals, in short, to cutthroats.

War has become much too messy and dangerous a business to glorify as this poster seems to do. The men in charge of making war should have a thorough hatred for it, for they, more than anybody else, realize its consequences. War should be the final recourse if we have exhausted every other means of avoiding it. But this poster celebrates the art of war. You could say that it is meant to be deterrence, but that policy is meant to be based on firmness, not standing up and shouting that you're going to chew an enemy's head off. This poster simply aims to make war look like a lot of rugged fun, where you get to grimace a lot in tough poses, and maybe kill some very bad men. That is an unrealistic view of life in the military, and those who put the poster up should have a deeper sense of responsibility and respect for Penn State students and appeal to our intelligence and motivation to serve the country. They should not try to make war look like a game.

Point:

Counterpoint

Greeting to fellow Penn Stateers,

It seems to me that there is increasingly less involvement on the part of the student body in school-related activities. Many will shrug off any possible involvement, stating simply that their studies require all their free time; some of these individuals hold one or more part time jobs, in addition to other outside obligations. While it may seem futile to change the system, that one voice cannot alter the course of events, I believe it can.

I, myself, could easily fit into the silent majority which is increasing in membership here at Penn State. However, after listening to many people complain about a number of "unfair" practices (and with good reason), for a year and a half, I

have concluded that the only way to voice our opinions is through this newspaper. After all, it is published for our benefit.

Here it is folks . . . your chance to say whatever you want to say about this campus. A column in which your letters will be printed, whether they are lengthy or terse. Do you want to know what goes on in student government? Do you have any questions about grading methods, parking tickets, or the removal of the Pac-man game? I'm sure you must.

So, please write to me, care of the Lion's Eye. All letters will be considered, and I will research any questions you may have.

Hoping to hear from you,
Melissa Grotz

Express your opinion. Write a letter to the editor.

