

Don't sign

Students for PennPIRG begins a massive effort today to persuade you and nearly 30,000 other Penn State students to sign a petition urging the Board of Trustees to establish a Public Interest Research Group at the University.

Their idea is a good one. A PIRG, student controlled yet employing professionals, could do much to advance the cause of consumerism and to defend the rights of students and the citizens of Pennsylvania.

Through PIRG, such problems as high rent, a state legislature unresponsive to higher education and outdated state liquor and marijuana laws could be effectively fought.

Sounds great. But don't sign the petition, at least until you consider PIRG's funding mechanism.

By signing the PIRG petition, you will be advocating what PIRG calls the refundable-refundable check-off system.

On every tuition bill, a space will be provided for students to indicate they do not wish to pay a \$2 PIRG fee. If you forget to check the bill or don't know about PIRG, too bad, you're out two bucks.

PIRG's advocates say this will rarely happen. They say PIRG will keep students so well informed that probably only 10 percent or fewer students will not know that the PIRG fee is optional.

PIRG supporters say that it is unfortunate that these 10 percent, or 6,000 University students will pay the fee. But, they say, is it fair for a 10 percent minority to prevent the majority of students from exercising their will and forming a PIRG?

We say yes.

Although 10 percent seems small, when figured against the number of people who will actually be paying for the PIRG, the percentage actually will be much higher.

National PIRG estimates that between 30 and 40 percent, or between 18,000 and 24,000 University students, will give \$2 a term to PIRG.

Therefore if 10 percent of the student body pays a PIRG fee through ignorance, between a third and a quarter of PennPIRG's funds will come from the ill informed.

In our minds, that's too many.

If PIRG truly had the interests of students and of the state's consumers at heart, they would not be advocating a funding mechanism that allows such a high percentage of their money to come from the ignorant.



GOT ANY MOVIES OF THE DALLAS COWBOYS HALF TIME SHOW?..

Letters to the Editor

Remember the deed

Oct. 22 marks one of the most sorrowful anniversaries in modern history. Ukrainians around the world have set this date aside to mark the 45th anniversary of the Great Famine that swept Ukraine in 1931-33. The famine was not caused by drought or other natural disaster, but by Soviet government imposed measures which removed virtually all edible foodstuffs from within the borders of Ukraine.

During this famine it is estimated that between seven and nine million people died of starvation. The figures are not definite because many people, particularly male family heads were deported to Siberia or simply shot.

One may ask why this happened. In the late '20s and early '30s, collectivization of farming in the Soviet Union was just getting started. This policy involved the confiscation of private material and land holdings and the establishment of huge state-owned collective farms. The Ukrainian nation resisted this to the utmost. In order to force the Ukrainian people into collectivization, the government in 1931 started demanding higher quotas of grain for export.

The quotas increased which put a strain on the grain stores which had suffered a poor harvest in 1931. The Kremlin then began demanding not only grain but also poultry and livestock as well.

By this time whole villages were being wiped out by starvation and deportation.

While this horror went on in Ukraine, the rest of the Soviet Union felt no famine or starvation. Only Ukraine suffered because her people resisted Moscow until they were finally starved into submission.

Only scanty news of the Soviet terror in Ukraine leaked out to the West. Moscow refused all offers of help to Ukraine from other nations because it simply denied any existence of famine in Ukraine!

This unspeakable act of genocide was successfully carried out by a government that still possesses Ukraine and the other countries of the so-called Soviet Union. The government imposed horrors are still continuing, though on a much smaller scale. Many people that have the courage to speak out and resist like the Ukrainian nation did from 1921-33 are being persecuted. Like in 1933, the West still remains deaf to much of this.

On Oct. 22, please join the Ukrainian people around the world in remembering the millions who died in the Great Famine and pray that the end of such horrors will not be long in coming.

John S. Butcher
13th-linguistics
Oct. 17

No correlation

Wednesday's issue of The Daily Collegian contained a letter from a concerned student about the arming of Police Service Officers. In that same paper, there was an article about an officer at another university who was gunned down by offenders even after he had rendered his own sidearm inoperable. The author of that first letter states that he is at a loss "to find an offense that would award a student being shot at."

I am at a loss to find an offense that would award a Police Service Officer being shot at.

Gary W Clark
4th-community development
Oct. 18

Ecclesiastical

I was somewhat dismayed at the cartoon by Mark VanDine which appeared in the Oct. 18 issue of The Daily Collegian. It seems that Mr. VanDine comprehends neither the historical nor the ecclesiastical significance of the election of a non-Italian pontiff.

This lack of understanding is illustrated in Mr. VanDine's choice of statement, made through his cartoon. Rather than say something meaningful, he chose to resort to ethnic slurs in an effort to fill space in the paper.

Really, Mr. VanDine, your cartoon provides a poor commentary, reflecting your total lack of understanding and your bigoted outlook concerning differing peoples.

It is no wonder that world peace is nothing more than a dream, considering that the news media promotes such degradation of national character. I did expect a higher degree of humor from you, Mr. VanDine.

Bert J. Oleson
10th-business logistics
Oct. 18

At a loss

When the first test tube baby was born in Britain, it became a news item in all the publications here including the front page of Time. I think that the second test tube baby born in India deserved a lot more attention from The Daily Collegian than the 'unintelligent' cartoon in the Oct. 12 issue.

The cartoonist gave that news item about India. I thought that I would give some more news items about India which most Americans are not aware of. Having achieved in-

dependence just 30 years before, India today is the largest democracy in the world.

Having the 13th highest Gross National Product in the world, India is gifted with the third-largest number of scientists and engineers in the world, next only to the United States and the U.S.S.R. Indian technology and know-how is going to a number of developing countries and also to the Mid-East. These achievements are a product of only 30 years of freedom.

I think advancement in science or technology cannot be related to poverty. There was a news item on CBS a week before last showing how the retired people in some part of Florida were suffering due to lack of food caused by their insufficient social security.

Some of those people were shown searching for food in the garbage piles near grocery stores. At the same time, there is Skylab going to space and the Viking Mission to Mars. I do not think it is appropriate to correlate these two issues. Similarly, I could not see any point in why the scientific achievement in India was related to poverty.

Trying to relate these two issues is injustice to the community of scientists and the remaining society as such. I therefore strongly feel that such cartoons are more or less a distortion of scientific achievement and it is a sad thing that it should appear in the publication of the intellectual community from a university campus.

Satishkumar Patil
graduate-business
Oct. 15

Trend

There seems to be a definite trend in this country to examine the darkest sides of an issue while ignoring the hopeful points. True to form, we've managed to do it again in the question of arming the Campus Police. We've seen the cartoon pictures of the rabbit-eyed students creeping forth to risk life and limb on their way to class, complete with helmet and bullet-proof vest. What we have refused to see so far is the courage of Director of University Safety David Stormer and the campus police as they request being allowed to arm themselves.

Rather than asking for a license to kill, these men are making a statement that they can do their job more effectively if they are given the proper tools. They are saying that they are willing to take the added responsibility of being armed in order to better carry out their work.

We need to consider this issue with a common sense approach rather than make it an emotional outlet for newspaper opinion writers. The men for whom firearms are requested have been well trained in police work and the handling of firearms.

S. Africa view needs re-evaluation

An ironic chord was struck in the news recently, and its tones ranged from the base of the African continent to University Park.

In one pitch, Pieter Botha, a hard-line proponent of apartheid, was named successor to the retiring John Vorster as prime minister of South Africa. That development sounded an end to hopes for a more moderate form of leadership in the racially segregated country.

Two weeks earlier, in a much less audible note on the political scale, the University Treasurer's office refused to follow-up on student suggestions to divest University holdings with corporations doing business in South Africa.

Central to the treasurer's stance were two points. The first claimed that divestiture of the University's \$5.8 million in South Africa-linked investments would damage Penn State's financial portfolio beyond repair. The second contended that the University could most effectively combat apartheid through maintaining its investments, and by using its shareholder status to voice support for such measures as the Sullivan principles — integration guidelines that have been adopted by several U.S. corporations with South African operations.

However, with the advent of Botha — a man who, in the words of United Nations Ambassador Andrew Young, must be "dragged kicking and screaming into the 20th century" on matters of race — the second feature of the treasurer's position is reduced to feeble optimism.

And it is now time for the University Board of Trustees and the student body to re-evaluate the University's stand on investments tied to South Africa.

In asserting that divestiture would create havoc within Penn State's investment portfolio, the treasurer has relied on untested theories and foggy legal guesswork. While it is true that much of the University's South Africa-linked holdings are with high-yield or blue-chip firms, it is not true — as the treasurer contends — that equally profitable investments without apartheid ties are impossible to find.

Paul Pringle

On the West Coast, where the campus divestiture movement got underway last year, two independent studies have shown that colleges can replace these controversial holdings with other investments, and suffer little or no fiduciary damage in the process.

For example, one alternative investment earmarked by the studies is government bonds, which pay guaranteed returns of up to 9 percent annually. Several of the Penn State holdings said to be indirectly supporting apartheid yield yearly earnings substantially below that figure, despite their blue-chip rating.

Other alternatives have been documented by the study groups. Among them are low-risk investments in

companies that simply are not involved in South Africa, and fixed-income investments in government-insured loans for community development projects.

Sadly, the University Treasurer's office did not even bother to explore those options. On the contrary, it rejected divestiture — a complicated concept requiring a long period of prudent consideration — in a matter of a few short-shrift weeks.

The rejection was partially based on the University's forecast of legal difficulties involving Penn State trust funds. Divestiture of these funds, the University felt, could trigger legal suits by holders of the trusts, who in some cases maintain the option of supervising investment of the funds. Here, the University was taking rhetorical shots in the dark. Simply, there are no precedents that would hold PSU legally responsible for trust revenue lost during divestiture procedures involving South Africa. Again, a more prudent and in-depth study of the question should have been undertaken.

Little study, however, is required of the moral issues involved in the apartheid controversy. South Africa's treatment of its majority black population is a well-documented abomination. And government-directed murder, torture and harassment of the nation's blacks are not expected to decrease under the heavy-fisted Botha regime.

By working within the corporate

system in South Africa — that is, by relying on the effectiveness of the Sullivan principles — Penn State is penning a slipshod and unrealistic script for its role as a socially conscious institution. The Sullivan principles at best are loopholed generalizations aimed at granting better conditions for only a fraction of South Africa's black workforce. Even in that limited scope, the principles often are ignored by hard-line chiefs of the South African economy.

"The Sullivan principles are laughable," Abraham Walker, a former economic official of the white South African government, said in a recent interview. "If the Pretoria (South Africa) government's position is segregation on the job, then that's the position they (U.S. corporations) must take. The Sullivan principles are merely words on a piece of paper."

Which also is the current status of the University's opposition to apartheid — words on a piece of paper. And those words are countered by \$5.8 million in investments.

So, as the Botha government begins tightening its reins on South African blacks, the University community should take a new and immediate look at the question of divestiture: More pointedly, it should ask itself whether it remains Penn State's place to indirectly support a country that is, by most accounts, unfit for human life.

Paul Pringle is a graduate student in journalism.

