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The Daily Tar Heel

87th year of editorial freedom

Still waiting

It has been almost 16 weeks since Iranian students invaded the U.S. embassy in Iran and took hostage 50 Americans. Initially, the debacle had both the United States and Iran up in arms, as marches, protests and threats of military intervention aptly demonstrated. However, the frenzied excitement which first accompanied the incident has given way to persistent and grim day-to-day negotiations which, no matter how sincere, have proved fruitless and frustrating.

Most recently, rumors of compromise and the possible release of the hostages failed to materialize as Ayatollah Ruhollah Khomeini said Saturday that no decision on the fate of the hostages would be made until Iran holds its parliamentary elections in April. The concurring response of the young militants—no hostages will be released until the shah is extradicted to Iran—seems enough to disillusion the most sanguine of observers.

The inability of President Carter, U.N. Secretary-General Kurt Waldheim and Iranian President Abolhassan Bani-Sadr to influence or even weaken the position of the militants and Khomeini, seems a portentous sign at best. And in the meantime, the world has slipped into a mood of quiet resignation. In Iran, the area outside the gates of the U.S. embassy, once inundated with thousands of Iranians, has grown still and quiet. In the United States, life goes on as usual even as bells ring daily for the prisoners. The refusal of numerous countries, pending the release of the hostages, to aid Iran's efforts to recover and endure disastrous floods and food shortages, also failed to weaken the position of the militants, whom Bani-Sadr himself called "lawless dictators."

The stalemate now in effect, when coupled with the situation in Afghanistan and Pakistan, only magnifies the confusion in the United States as to the sagacity of its policy in the Middle East. The possibility of the shah being delivered to Iran seems dubious and, given the latest opinion handed down by Khomeini and the militants, the impending implications are cause for immediate concern. Certainly, the most recent events will fuel the fire of interventionists who have concluded, perhaps correctly, that the only alternatives available to this country short of some type of military action, are inane and ineffectual negotiations and the continuation of helpless waiting.

A pervasive sickness

Student apathy—a sickness everywhere but in Carmichael and Kenan Stadiums—is always a problem in campus elections, and the symptoms were evident again last week when a Campus Governing Council seat was decided by a vote of two to one. Ernest McCutcheon thought he had been elected by a single vote, but the next day Brian Goray claimed the seat with his two votes and, tongue in cheek, attributed his win to a platform of "restoring legitimacy to student government." Although the district Goray won has never had a high voter turnout, the whole affair points to a more serious problem—a pervasive student apathy towards student government and a confusion over the CGC's function.

One student became incensed when a CGC candidate told her he would not comment on any issues because he had no idea what his job would involve. She ran a last-minute write-in campaign, earned 105 of 437 votes, and almost forced a run-off against one of the other two candidates. Part of the problem is that the average UNC student really does not know what the CGC does. There is a general sense that the CGC allocates money in the spring but little more than that is known.

The CGC is made up of three committees, the Rules and Judiciary, the Student Affairs, and the one that plays a prominent role in the May budget hearings, the Finance Committee. The CGC's most important responsibility involves the allocation of roughly \$250,000 of student fees. The CGC members play a crucial role in deciding where this money is eventually apportioned. Yet, despite this important task only 25 percent of UNC students thought it worth their time to vote for student body president—even less voted for CGC representatives. This aggressive ennu challenges both CGC members and new student body president Bob Saunders to enlist student involvement. When Jim Phillips was elected president two years ago, he used campaign workers and staff members to solicit student input—action which at least showed sincere commitment.

Perhaps CGC members need not take such a drastic step, but certainly they should actively seek to obtain feedback and inform constituents of the happenings within the CGC. Such action is imperative if student government is to be successful in its efforts to truly represent the best interests of the University community.

The best in hockey

Closing ceremonies were held for the XIII Winter Olympiad Sunday, bringing to an end the Games that often seemed to be more trouble than they were worth. Problems beset the Lake Placid Olympics from beginning to end. Poor weather, first in the form of a snow drought and then a blizzard which effectively shut down transportation systems, created problems that local organizers were incapable of solving.

The Olympic ideal itself was threatened by the possibility that politics might prevent the world's athletes from participating in the Summer Games in Moscow, and the presence of an often-victorious Soviet team served to remind the world of the Soviet presence in other foreign countries—including Afghanistan.

American competitors seemed to encounter more than their share of difficulties as well. Favored ice skaters Tai Babilonia and Randy Gardner had to withdraw when Gardner was injured. 1976 cross country skiing silver medalist Bill Koch was forced to drop out of the 25 kilometer race. Highly publicized speed skater Beth Heiden was labeled a loser by some when, under pressure, she won only one bronze medal in her three races.

In the closing days of the games, however, our athletes responded in the way they knew best. Heiden's brother Eric, also a speed skater, shrugged off pain and pressure to become the first Olympian ever to win five gold medals in a single celebration of the Games. Skier Phil Mahre won the first American medal in men's skiing since 1964, taking the silver in the special slalom. Finally, the exuberant United States hockey team upset the Russians, unbeaten in the Olympics since 1960, and clinched the gold with a win over Finland Sunday.

The Americans won by beating the Soviets at their own game with discipline, crisp passing and a tenacious defense led by Boston University goalie Jim Craig. As Craig said after the game, "We beat the best team in hockey; but then, maybe we're the best team in hockey." Their victory was triumphant not because they won a Cold War victory, but because they played well and won. In doing so they affirmed the Olympic ideals of competition and fairness.

U.S. international influence in decline

'In Quotes'

By JOHN DUSENBURY

In the years between the Tet offensive in Vietnam and the siege of the U.S. embassy in Tehran, American influence overseas has weakened dramatically.

In an interview last week, James R. Leutze, history professor and chairman of the curriculum in Peace, War and Defense cited a number of factors for America's decline in world prominence. Leutze feels that the United States' top priority should be continued negotiations such as SALT II that would strengthen its position and reverse this trend.

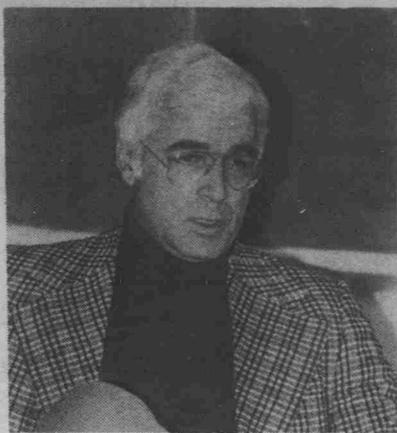
"Our declined world leadership comes about for a number of reasons, the most obvious being the rebuilding of the economy after World War II," Leutze said. "As more and more competitors came into being we lost the ability to call the shots. Only recently have we come into the situation in which many people with expertise in the area of the military have accepted this fact."

"We used to talk about the idea of superiority, then moved to the idea of parity and only recently have we moved into the situation of sufficiency—and sufficiency might be below the level of some other country such as the Soviet Union."

Leutze said it is not entirely bad that America has lost its ability to totally control events in the area of international policy. "We need to recognize the limitations of our power and the need for us to live and work cooperatively with other world powers," he said. "We need to look reality in the face and realize that we cannot dominate the world economically and understand that we do not need to."

The fact that the Soviet Union has been outpacing and outproducing the United States in a variety of areas in military weaponry, particularly in conventional or non-nuclear armaments, concerns Leutze.

"Russia's increased production of conventional weapons worries me more than their advances over us in nuclear weaponry," he said. "The desire of all U.S. politicians is to go to war as cheaply as possible and the cheapest way is nuclear. It is much better to handle



James Leutze DTH/File photo

problems with conventional military forces rather than a nuclear defense. I think it is illogical to think that we could fight a war against the Soviets on a tactical nuclear level; a tactical nuclear war would quickly rise to a strategic nuclear war. The boundary between the two is so imprecise."

Leutze is not impressed with the volunteer army both because it is at reduced strength and because of its generally lower level of intellectual capability.

"Some of our combat force units are, for practical purposes, 50 percent effective. Many of the personnel in units that have highly complex weapons cannot read well enough to know how to work those weapons. Another concern is the size and capability of the Navy at present—this is an important area in which we are falling behind and it is a way to express power without nuclear power expression."

Soviet forces outnumber American in terms of tactical aircraft as well as manpower, Leutze said, and would win a war fought with only conventional weapons. "If the Soviets decide to really move, which I doubt," Leutze

said, "the only way we could realistically stop them would be through the use of tactical nuclear weapons."

"I think it would be madness for either side to become involved in a strategic nuclear exchange thinking that they could win because the outcome would be mutual destruction. I believe that if everyone is given time to see things in a realistic phase then I doubt there would be strategic nuclear exchange, but people do not always act rationally when they are committed and losing," he said.

Leutze is not convinced that all NATO powers would agree to defend against a Soviet move. "I think it would be unwise to say unquestionably NATO will stand together," Leutze said. "It is doubtful that they would agree to use tactical weapons because that would mean destroying their own territory. The answer to this is very uncertain."

"I feel that it is very probable that there is a certain degree of overreaction involved here. I do not believe the Soviet Union is immediately going beyond Afghanistan into Pakistan or Iran. Most likely, the Soviets are going to stabilize position so that if Iran goes into civil war, as I believe it will, they will be able to move quickly through Afghanistan and into Iran to take advantage of the situation."

"The United States needs to realize that we can respond other than militarily to this situation," Leutze said. "We need to take advantage of Soviet distress at this point—we need to demonstrate to the Middle East and Third World that we understand some of the endemic difficulties that their societies face. An intelligent response would be to take advantage of the fact that the Soviets have hurt themselves and try to demonstrate creative leadership in a variety of ways."

Leutze is not surprised that the Soviets are behaving aggressively at this time, because the Soviet Union has had economic and social problems and has failed to solve them. One thing they can do, he said, is to express themselves militarily.

He believes, however, that the Soviets will attempt to extend their influence wherever and however they can. "The Soviet threat is not going to disappear anytime soon," Leutze said. "The Soviet Union is a major power and they are going to continue to be a major power."

John Dusenbury, a junior journalism major from Tryon, is a staff writer for The Daily Tar Heel.

Letters to the editor

Libertarian Party seen as selfish, naive

To the editor:

I've read with interest the numerous letters about the proposed draft registration as people bandy pros and mostly cons back and forth. But the letter from Elizabeth Ratchford, "Military registration borders on slavery," (DTH, Feb. 19), was so outstandingly ironic and ridiculous that I felt obliged to write. Her group, the Libertarian Party, has reached a new zenith of selfishness and naivete, and their gall in outlining their "belief" that "all individuals have the natural right to exercise sole dominion over their own lives" is exceeded only by the narrow-minded "me first" attitude at the base of this ideology. By attempting to turn a political question into an issue of philosophical disposition, this party completely has ignored the intrinsic paradox its belief contains.

The first and most outlandish statement Ratchford makes is that any "coercive control of the lives and actions of others is slavery." That is absurd. One could take this notion as far as possible and still slavery would be questionable at best. For instance, does a policeman who pulls you over for speeding force you into slavery? Does a professor make us slaves because he can fail us for skipping class? Do the laws that constrain our lives make us slaves to them? Certainly all are a form of "coercive control" of our lives yet we do not presume to be slaves in the sense Ratchford implies. I would concede that we are all slaves to civilization, but that is an unavoidable and often desirable. So on this nebulous concept of slavery, the Libertarian Party bases its attack on the draft.

The notion that a country does not have the right to draft or control its people is quite simply anarchistic. No person living in a nation has "sole dominion" over himself because he is part of a society. But Ratchford completely ignores all obligations a citizen has to his country. The fact is, we are not separate islands, living isolated lives, but we are a part of this nation as a whole. And each of us has an obligation and duty to our fellow citizens, and thus to our country. What irony that Ratchford refers to "U.S. citizens" when apparently she does not know the meaning of the words. Merely existing in a nation does not constitute citizenship—there are responsibilities attached. The freedom and liberty she so easily calls into play do not come without such responsibilities; our generation of Americans has always had freedom, so it is easy to assume it is inherent in life. But it is not.

The mere possibility of being able to choose one's profession (to be or not to be in the military) is available only because people before us were willing to be soldiers when it was necessary. They put something ahead of themselves: their duty. Phillip Busby's letter "Military registration borders on slavery," (DTH, Feb. 19) also of the Libertarian Party, makes the same circular argument; he wants the freedom to choose his job, but is not willing to stand by the society that gives him the freedom in the first place. He speaks of "slavery" and of a violation of "rights" yet in the same breath he uses the term "free society." There are not any societies of one. We are free only because we are a part of this society, which, by the way, is not self-sustaining. It requires support from the public and that support is mandatory.

Ratchford's idea that only individuals know what is best for them precludes the fact that we live in an interdependent society and world. And there is most certainly a "common interest" comprised of individual interests that is worth pursuing. It's called the common good, which at times conflicts with some individuals' "best interest." But that is the price of social living; one cannot always have everything the way he would like. The entire "individualist knows best"



scenario would be lovely if we all lived on Gilligan's Island, where a few people inhabited a small area. But that is not the case. In our country no man is totally free, whether 20 and drafted or 40 and rationed at home. There is a debt to be paid.

It appears to me that the Libertarian Party only wants the benefits of freedom and none of the responsibilities. To label the draft as an "immoral institution" is nothing more than verbose gobbledeygook. We simply cannot ignore the roles we have as citizens because we disagree with a specific policy. We have to face the fact that our government has the authority and right to control certain aspects of our lives—and that authority is given by us. In exchange for that, we enjoy a lifestyle with freedom and liberties unique in the history of man. Yet now suddenly the Libertarian Party feels independent enough to assert what must surely be the epitome of the "me generation's" lopsided perspective on life. To paraphrase Socrates, "All good citizens have an obligation to good states." So I suppose the irony of a group holding obliquely anarchistic views calling itself a "party" is too scary to be funny.

Perhaps the most ironic point of all this stuff is that I also happen to believe conscription at this time is unwise. It could easily lead to a war we don't want or need. Unquestionably, oil is no cause for war, but I cannot advocate anarchy (under any name) to change our policies. Our system of government was designed to incorporate change, and just as it is our duty to obey our government, it is also our obligation and duty to make damned sure the people in charge are responsive, competent, and intelligent—people who would fight only when it is unavoidable and imperative, and not before. And we can do this within the paradigm of our governmental system. It is election year and now is the time to put people in office who can hear what we the public are saying. Certainly, let's make some changes in policy, but not at the expense of our freedoms; those freedoms we take for granted now. It should be apparent we all have a duty to perform for our country, and fighting, if necessary, for our "country's interest" is not wrong or immoral when those interests are exactly that: our country's. It is the elitist and narrow-minded self-serving interests that must be challenged.

McGuire Gordon
Carrboro

Slavery or liberty

To the editor:

Elizabeth Echols, in her letter "Draft Ensures Rights," (DTH, Feb. 21) is "appalled" that Libertarians believe that the draft is nothing less than slavery. Echols does not deny that forcing individuals to serve in the military is involuntary servitude (slavery), yet she goes on to say that the "military draft can and will ensure...fundamental rights of U.S. citizens." I am astounded by Echols' exercise in double-think, especially since she recognizes that a libertarian is "an advocate of freedom for all." If insisting upon the right of individuals to decide whether or not they will enter the military, or any other profession, is not a libertarian position, what is Echols suggesting?

Am I to understand her to mean that involuntary servitude is ok with libertarians only if it is imposed in the name of national service, either military or civilian? If so, Echols does violence to the ideals of libertarianism, and as a libertarian I must protest.

Echols says, "The first libertarians were our forefathers, the British Americans. They were not too busy living their fat, choosy lives to fight for the independence of the country." With respect to the first sentence quoted, I would agree with Echols, with one qualification: The libertarianism of our "forefathers" was afflicted by a serious, eventually disastrous flaw, namely the acquiescence in the institution of slavery. I hope that the libertarians of today will recognize slavery in whatever guise it appears, and oppose it.

In reference to the second part of the quotation, I resent the implication that members of the Libertarian Party are corrupt, persnickety sorts who would be "too busy to fight for the independence of this country." Libertarians realize that the right to liberty implies the right to self-defense, and that failure to exercise the latter right frequently results in the abrogation of the former. Nevertheless, libertarians recognize no moral justification for compelling anyone to defend a "way of life," a "society," or a government because libertarians are dedicated to a consistent, principled respect for the sovereignty of every individual. This respect for the rights of the individual stems from a conviction that everyone possesses the natural right to life, liberty and the use of justly (non-coercively and non-fraudulently) acquired property. Echols asserts that such rights "come from the United States

government," libertarians disagree, and so, I daresay, would the "founding fathers," who realized that rights exist independently of governments and who sought to establish a government which would affirm and protect such rights. I submit that any government which enslaves its citizens through conscription has exceeded its authority, and is not longer (as Jefferson put it) a "necessary evil" but simply evil.

If the United States government continues to commit the American people to the role of world policeman as it has done for the better part of this century, then there is no doubt that the draft will, once again, be upon us. There is no other way for the government to maintain the military's bloated manpower requirements, which are the result, primarily, of troop commitments overseas. Thus, the draft is a necessary tool of an interventionist foreign policy which consumes around two-thirds of the American defense budget. The Libertarian Party offers a non-interventionist alternative which obviates the so-called "need" for a draft. I believe the choice is clear: either empire abroad and slavery at home—or liberty.

Robert McDowell
Rt. 2 Chapel Hill

Different strokes

To the editor:

With regards to the letter, "Priorities illustrated," (DTH, Feb. 20) by Timothy B. Brown, which concerned the abominable (at least, to Mr. Brown) fact that Woolen Gym will soon be open more hours each week than Wilson Library, I can say only this: I can study in my living room, but cannot swim in the bathtub.

George Sheppard
306 Northampton Plaza

Letters?

The Daily Tar Heel welcomes contributions and letters to the editor. For prompt publication, all submissions must be typed triple-spaced on a 60-space line and signed. Letter writers should include their address and phone number. Column writers should include their class, major and hometown. All contributions are subject to editing.