

The Panama Canal:

Arguments For And Against Ratification Of Canal Treaties:

By Sandra Spear

Last of a Series

NOTE: In reading this article, the reader should bear in mind that this writer supports ratification. This fact may color her discussion of the arguments against ratification. Additions, corrections or deletions are welcomed. SLS

Numerous arguments have been made for and against ratification of the proposed Panama Canal treaties. Two primary issues are debated: the need for a new treaty and the provisions of such a treaty. I will outline the major arguments on each side of each issue, beginning with those for a new treaty.

It is argued that the Hay-Bunau-Varilla Treaty (1903) was ethically wrong when negotiated, particularly since it was negotiated with a 15-day old government which was desperate for recognition and funds. The treaty was, in essence, a prime example of American colonialism and was quite similar to the unequal treaties forced upon China in the 19th and early 20th centuries. Furthermore, U.S. control of the Canal Zone remains an embarrassment in American relations with both the Communist bloc and the Third World. In fact, some would argue, it is proof positive of Soviet accusations of American imperialism. Additionally, the transfer of sovereignty over the Canal Zone to Panama would lend far more credence to Carter's morally-based foreign policy, particularly since the Canal Zone is governed by an appointee of the President of the U.S., in violation of our general commitment to governmental self-determination for all peoples.

To these arguments, groups opposing the transfer of sovereignty argue that, because the U.S. bought the Canal Zone, built and continue to maintain the Canal, the Canal Zone is just as much ours as is any other American possession, particularly since the purchase of the Canal Zone was made according to the terms of a duly negotiated treaty- and not as was bounty. Furthermore, it is argued, continued American control over and operation of the Panama Canal are crucial to the continued neutrality of the Canal, and neutrality is essential for both international commerce and security. Opposition forces fear the possibility of a revolution in Panama which might bring an anti-American government into power. They also fear that this government then might close the Canal to American vessels.

In response to these arguments, those in favor of transferring sovereignty over the Canal Zone argue that revenues from Canal operations, which the U.S. keeps, plus the economic benefits to the U.S. from the use of the Canal have more than compensated for any expenses incurred. In terms of the future neutrality of the Canal, it is argued first that the major threat of revolution in Panama is American control of the Canal, and that the transfer of sovereignty to Panama would appease opposition forces in Panama enough to prevent a revolution. Furthermore, the terms of the defense treaty allow the U.S. to share in the defense of the Canal. Some military strategists argue that it is much easier to defend the Canal from the outside through offensive tactics than to defend it from a vulnerable placement in the Canal Zone itself.

Arguments over the terms of the new treaties have not been developed to the extent that arguments over transfer of sovereignty have, primarily because the Senate Foreign Relations Committee has just begun Hearings on the subject. To the extent that they have been developed, arguments center on alleged ambiguity in the wording of the defense treaty and the amounts of the annuity payments and military and economic aid provisions of the operations treaty.



In regard to the defense treaty, the governments of Panama and the U.S. have different interpretations of the provision for America's right to share in the defense of the Canal. The U.S. claims that this provision gives it the right to guarantee the neutrality of the Canal. Panama says that it does not give the U.S. that right. In terms of payments for use of the Canal, opposition forces argue that \$60 million is far too high a figure. Those favoring ratification argue that the sum is commensurate with the value of the Canal to both the U.S. and Panama. The specified \$345 million in economic and military aid is defended in essentially the same manner, while opposition forces attack the sum as being outrageous.

The outcome of the ratification fight in the Senate will have repercussions in American foreign policy for years to come. It behooves every student at Salem to keep abreast of the issue as it develops.

S.G.A. Reports

By Connie Caldwell

All women's colleges are not alike. They do, however, have many similar problems and goals. Recognizing this fact, a number of women's colleges in the southeastern states joined together last year to form the Southeastern Women's College Council of Student Governments.

November 4-6, Salem College will act as hostess for the second meeting of the SEWCCSG. Workshops and group discussions will facilitate the exchange of ideas among representatives of the various institutions. Tentative topics for workshops include residence hall and social regulations, faculty advising, student organizations, special academic programs, and student leadership.

Each college will have the opportunity to gain from the experiences of other colleges. The twelve colleges to be represented are Converse, Virginia Intermont, Peace, Queens, Agnes Scott, Wesleyan, Brenav, Meredith, Southern Seminary, Hollins, Sweet Briar, and Salem.

Representatives will be staying in the dormitories Friday and Saturday nights. If you would like to help SGA by having a representative as a guest, please contact any member of Executive Board.

Circle K Membership Drive

Circle K Club is the collegiate level of Kiwanis International—a non-profit, service club. Club members provide service to the community and the campus

through projects such as tutoring children or, holding a breast cancer program here at school.

This year, the club has had Cpl. Bob Hammons from the Public Safety Department as a guest speaker on "Women's Self Defense, have worked at the Back Door, and will soon begin tutoring girls at the Salvation Army Girl's Club.

Circle K activities include more than service projects. Many social activities are held throughout the year, either just with Salem members or with Salem members and members of some other Circle K Club (such as Wake Forest or N.C. State). This past weekend, Salem 3 chapter met at Camp New Hope (right outside of Chapel Hill), at a Membership Training Rally with 150 other Circle K'ers.

Anyone who would like to join the club is welcome. Meetings are Monday nights, 6:30 p.m. at the Back Door.

Letters...

Dear Editor,

In response to the letter in last week's issue concerning the Big Four spirit chain competition, we wish to correct the many inaccuracies presented.

First of all, the spirit chain competition was accused of "foster(ing) an unhealthy rivalry between classes." Why was this particular event singled out as being "unhealthy" when the success of the entire day is based upon this very rivalry? The project was started as a fund raiser for the Big Four committee and continued in this manner during the entire "Spirit Week." Publicity for the project specified that any money made would be used for the Big Four social functions which cater to the entire student body, not just one class.

The Executive Finance Board stated that the "petition would have not been passed" had they known that the competition counted towards points for Founder's Day. We advise the people who review the money-making petitions to read them more carefully in the future because, in the petition approved on September 26, it is stated that "points will be given on Founder's Day." The petition was signed and approved by Connie Caldwell.

Our next question is, "who and what do you deem as an 'impartial person?'" A freshman was overall chairman for the project with people from each class on the committee. At the final counting of the links at 6:00 Sunday night (which, by the way, was stated as the deadline and if you question this, please see a copy of the flyer that was placed in your box) there were members from all four classes present. We feel that this is as impartial as could possibly be.

Yes, there is "an explanation for the group of seniors standing around the tally table..." 1) the "group" consisted of members from each class, not just the seniors. 2) the "tally table" was in reality, the dinner hostess's table. The actual tallying of the links took place in Dee Wilson's room, (chairman of the project) after the 6:00 deadline. 3) "open checkbooks" were not "in hand" and money was rejected after the deadline.

The Competition, as originally planned, counted only one-thirteenth of the games. As it was, winning this one game had no effect on the final outcome of the games.

We understand that people can be offended by money being involved in Founder's Day competition, but no one was forced to contribute. Have you forgotten that the money did not go simply for "construction paper," but for the Big Four to provide better dances for YOU!

Furthermore, may we suggest that in the future, when writing Letters to the Editor, arguments should be based on fact, rather than more hearsay.

Jennifer Coe
Jan Guiton
Terry Tipton
Martha Lee Hooser
Leigh Shearin
Jean Fleming
Dee Wilson

The Salemite

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