Opinion

Daily Nebraskan
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Feud nothing new

Recognition needed for Yugoslav states

Nearly 300 people have died in Yugoslavia since June 25, when the republic of Croatia declared independence.

Unlike events in the Soviet Union, the fighting in Yugoslavia has not attracted banner headlines. It has been a steady, unchanging, unsensational process, except to those involved in it. Every day, there are reports of a broken cease-fire, renewed negotiations and deaths.

The rivalry between Serbs and Croats is nothing new. It has roots in World War II, when Croatia was dominated by Germany while the republic of Serbia was controlled by the Soviet Union.

Now, fighting between Croats and ethnic Serbs living in Croatia goes on.

But the rift tearing the Yugoslav confederation apart runs deeper than a mere rivalry between two feuding republics.

Americans tend to view Eastern Europe as a homogenous bloc, composed of similar nations and peoples. It was always the area behind the Iron Curtain, under the wing of the Soviet Union. When the people finally got fed up with Communism, they all erupted at once, toppling their Soviet puppet leaders.

The apparently synchronized timing of the reform movements may have contributed to this thinking, but the diverse ideologies, methods and leaders of the uprisings also prove that as many or more differences exist within Eastern Europe as in any other area of the world.

And Yugoslavia, although never a viable member of the Communist Soviet bloc, is a microcosm of Eastern Europe.

The country was formed in 1918, but the separate republics and ethnic groups, recent events prove, still prefer to think of themselves as Slovenes and Serbs, Croats and Macedonians.

Since the death of Yugoslavia's only national leader, Josip Broz Tito, in 1980, a collective presidency has been in place, with a goal of keeping any one ethnic group or republic from gaining too much power.

That system may have worked in the previous Eastern Bloc climate, in which national movements stayed beneath the surface. But in the new Eastern Europe, the Yugoslav government by committee, perhaps shackled by too many checks and balances, has failed.

Like the Soviet Union, Yugoslavia is grappling with the question of who controls the tools of authority and war once central power crumbles.

But world leaders, quick to jump on the bandwagon of Baltic self-determination, are slow to accept an independent Croatia or Slovenia.

And this week's accusations that the Yugoslav army has been aiding the Serbs in their fight against the Croats muddles the message the Yugoslavian government sends to the outside world.

An unbreachable cease-fire will not come to Yugoslavia as long as the army is allowed to provide "national security" to one side at the expense of the other.

Yugoslavia needs more than cease-fires and European Community advisers. It needs recognition, and acceptance, of its fragmented state.

—*E.F.P.*

LETTER *POLICY*

The Daily Nebraskan welcomes brief letters to the editor from all readers and interested others.

Letters will be selected for publication on the basis of clarity, originality, timeliness and space available. The Daily Nebraskan retains the right to edit all material submitted.

Readers also are welcome to submit material as guest opinions. Whether material should run as a letter or guest opinion, or not to run, is left to the editor's discretion.

Letters and guest opinions sent to the newspaper become the property of the Daily Nebraskan and cannot be returned.

Anonymous submissions will not be considered for publication. Letters should include the author's name, year in school, major and group affiliation, if any. Requests to withhold names will not be granted.

Submit material to the Daily Nebraskan, 34 Nebraska Union, 1400 R

EDITORIAL *POLICY*

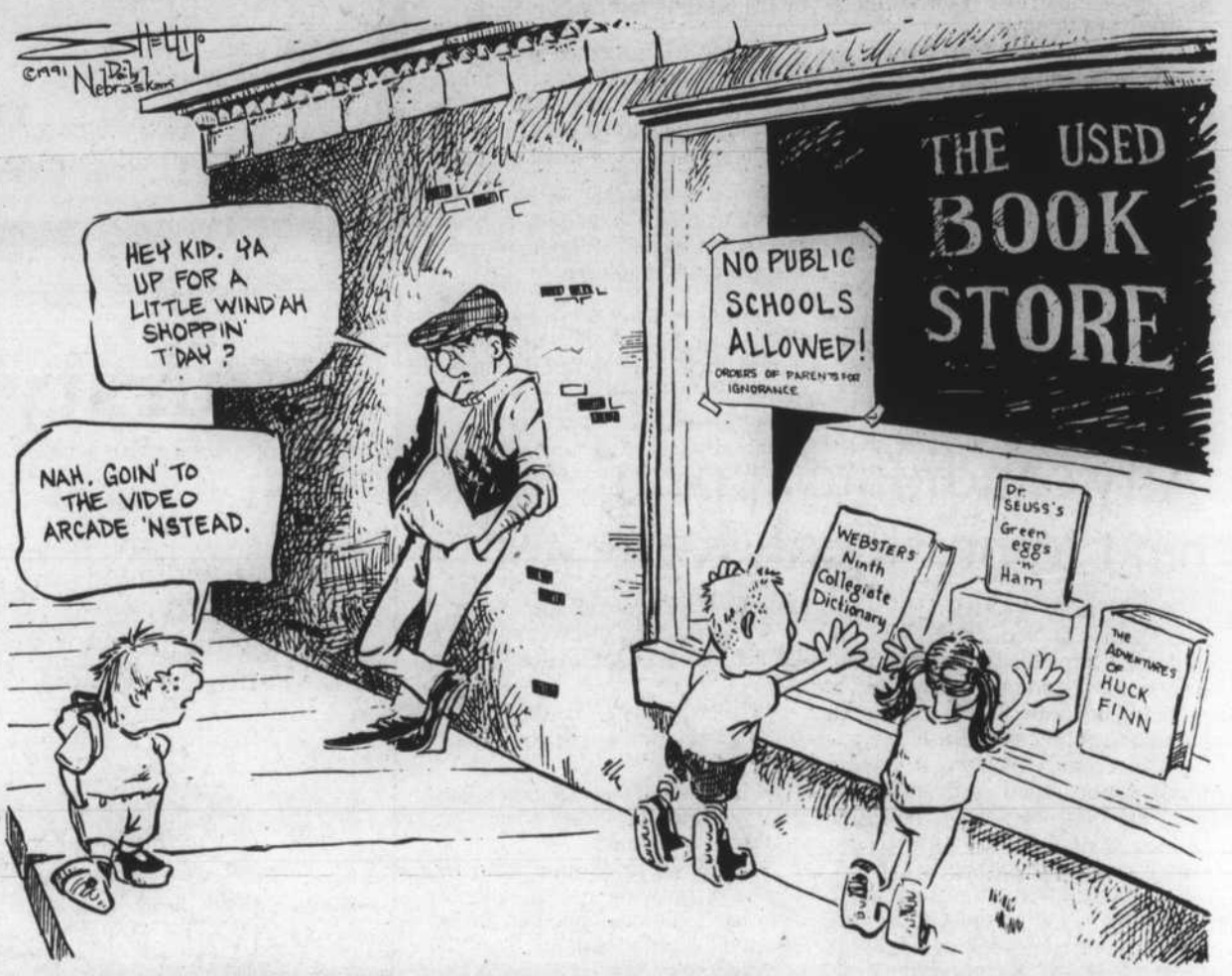
Signed staff editorials represent the official policy of the Fall 1991 Daily Nebraskan. Policy is set by the Daily Nebraskan Editorial Board. Its members are: Jana Pedersen, editor; Eric Pfanner, editorial page editor; Diane Brayton, managing editor; Walter Gholson, columnist; Paul Domeier, copy desk chief; Brian Shellito, cartoonist; Michael Stock, columnist.

Editorials do not necessarily reflect the views of the university, its employees, the students or the NU Board of Regents.

Editorial columns represent the opinion of the author.

The Daily Nebraskan's publishers are the regents, who established the UNL Publications Board to supervise the daily production of the paper.

According to policy set by the regents, responsibility for the editorial content of the newspaper lies solely in the hands of its students.



CHRIS POTTER

Apartheid may end in bloodshed

In a period of Iraqi invasions, Desert Storms and Soviet coups, other less glamorous yet equally important world events seem marginalized. The slow crumbling of apartheid, the rotten relic of racist government in South Africa, has escaped the media's attention at a critical juncture.

Apartheid will end. That racist ideology can no longer keep the black majority from power. The question is whether it will end peacefully or with large-scale violence. Ominously, two staggering episodes have called apartheid's peaceful demise into question.

In early July, President Bush announced that the United States would lift economic sanctions imposed on the South African government by the Comprehensive Anti-Apartheid Act of 1986. In the same month, South Africa's President F.W. de Klerk confessed that his government had financed secretly the Inkatha party in an effort to destabilize the principal party responsible for negotiations, the African National Congress.

Removal of U.S. sanctions and the revelation of the $700,000 payment to Inkatha probably will lead away from the peaceful course of reform charted by ANC President Nelson Mandela toward unprecedented white-on-black, white-on-white and black-on-black bloodshed.

White police will continue to suppress black protesters and the white zealots of the racist Afrikaner fringe opposed to ending apartheid. Inkatha and ANC supporters will continue to battle. Thousands have already died in that old feud.

Inkatha and the ANC, rival black political parties, hold different views on sanctions: Inkatha opposes them while the ANC supports them.

The argument for sanctions is more cogent. If enough economic entities boycott or sanction South Africa, its crippled economy would force the white minority government to negotiate with the black majority for a new democratic, non-racist government.

Inkatha Chief Mangosuthu Buthelezi counters that sanctions only hurt impoverished black workers. This, despite the fact that the Congress of South African Trade Unions, the paramount black labor organization, has consistently called for sanctions.

Historians of the 21st century will look back on the last years of the 20th as the decade of the demise of communism and apartheid. Communism has gone out with relatively little bloodshed. Apartheid may go out with considerably more.

In light of Inkatha's collusion with the white minority government, Buthelezi's argument against sanctions now appears hollow. (According to The Economist magazine, a government official said Buthelezi was "very emotional and expressed extreme gratitude" for the South African government's money.)

Rather than the moderate alternative to Mandela he presented himself to be, Buthelezi appears now to be little more than a stooge of the white minority government.

Clearly Buthelezi was correct in asserting that sanctions hurt black South Africans. But Mandela, the ANC and Congress of Trade Unions correctly put this economic pain in perspective: A short-term economic hurt coupled with the demise of apartheid is preferable to long-term economic stability coupled with enduring apartheid. In fact, an end to apartheid promises to improve the economic well-being of blacks.

An end to sanctions is, as Mandela put it, premature. When the European Community lifted sanctions several months ago, Mandela put it in stronger terms: The action was racist.

After the ANC publicly renounced an armed struggle against the government last August as a show of good faith, sanctions were the only bargaining chip the ANC had in negotiating. Now Mandela and the ANC have no bargaining chips, save violence.

De Klerk has gone far in removing some of the more superficial aspects of apartheid. He has released many dissidents from jail and allowed press censorship to ease.

But a new constitution still has not been drafted. Blacks still cannot vote. Government funding to Inkatha is a decidedly poor show of good faith.

If the South African government decides to obstruct further progress, the ANC will be forced to resume an armed struggle.

One hope stands out that blood will not be shed due to the repeal of the Anti-Apartheid Act.

According to the Investor Responsibility Research Center, an independent non-profit corporation, most companies that are "avoiding South Africa are doing so because of the 140 state and local laws . . . (that) will take far longer to repeal." These companies "will be looking for political and economic stability," two features South Africa currently lacks.

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Potter is a senior physics, philosophy, math and history major and a Daily Nebraskan columnist.