

The Daily Nebraskan

FORTY-SECOND YEAR

Subscription Rates are \$1.00 Per Semester or \$1.50 for the College Year. \$3.50 Mailed. Single copy, 5 Cents. Entered as second-class matter at the postoffice in Lincoln, Nebraska, under Act of Congress March 3, 1879, and at special rate of postage provided for in Section 1103, Act of October 3, 1917. Authorized September 30, 1922.

Published daily during the school year except Mondays and Saturdays, vacations and examinations periods by Students of the University of Nebraska under the supervision of the Publications Board.

Offices Union Building.
Day—2-7181. Night—2-7193. Journal—2-3330.

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The Umpteenth Round

"500,000 Miners Out on Strike."

Those were the words which headlined papers all over the nation Saturday morning. In them, American people saw something they could not understand. Just why would a half million men go on strike in wartime, particularly after the president had warned of "stern measures" if a strike threatened by John L. Lewis was carried out?

News of the strike reached our fighting men abroad; their first reaction, according to a correspondent in the Far East, was "one of bewilderment, then of anger."

"I'd just as soon shoot one of them—as a Jap," one American infantryman declared. "Going on a coal strike now is just as much treason as giving up information to the Japs."

"Just what the hell," one soldier from Idaho wanted to know, "do they think we're fighting for? We're trying to get this thing over so that we can again concentrate on our own national problems—not so that the UMW, the CIO, the AFL, or any other group can take advantage of an emergency to get what they've been after so long."

Another, a little more pointedly, shouted: "Bring John L. Lewis out here! We will take care of him!"

And that's the way our fighting men looked at it. DNB and radio Tokio had a field day; London was bitter, Rome blisteringly sarcastic.

The answer? Is difficult to determine. Certainly the half million miners felt that they were doing the right thing. Lewis had clashed with Roosevelt time and again on the issue of higher wages. In earlier disputes—most of them in peacetime—strike had accomplished what hearings and discussions had failed to accomplish. Half a million idle men represents a serious threat to the war effort, no matter what their work may have been; John L. Lewis and the miners knew that, hence the strike.

Saturday, at noon, the government took over full control of all coal mines. For the remainder of the war, it would seem, labor leaders contemplating strikes will know what to expect. And, very probably, there will be no more of them.

From the past weekend came a lesson—both to labor and the government—that, if learned before, might have maintained some harmony where strife alone has prevailed. And thus does the problem of government and labor relations loom as a major one in post-war domestic reorganization.

Another round has ended. Washington will have to call the shots for the remainder of what looks like a pretty rough battle. —G. W. A.

Compulsory Military Training Valuable . . .

Ever increasing in favor is the proposal for peacetime military training of young men. Reports from Washington indicate that Congressional leaders endorse such a program, and President Roosevelt has been described as thinking about such post-war training for young people of both sexes.

The press dispatches said that the congressmen were but lukewarm over including women in an over-all youth training program, however.

Although it does not seem wise to include women in the program, compulsory military training of young men appears inevitable. Certainly, the United States should stand forever ready for any kind of action with millions of youths trained for any eventuality.

And just as surely, the young men of America will gain advantage by such training from a military and even more so from a physical point of view.

The compulsory aspect of the program will be attacked as will be the militaristic stigma. But it is about time that the American people learned to look at reality and recognize the fact that there is no such thing as an isolated nation, that the post-war world will not be a guaranteed peace regardless of the treaty and the reorganization of the world.

Military training will not hurt anybody in war or peacetime. There is no reason to believe, moreover, that compulsory military training will make American youths war minded. It will make them physically hard, mentally sharp—prepared for any eventuality.

Letterip . . .

...Engineers Write

Dear Sir:

In a time when the entire civilized world is fighting against intolerance and ignorance your unprovoked condemnation of the University of Nebraska engineers, of whom you know absolutely nothing, was not only disgusting, but unpatriotic and completely un-American.

We refuse to believe your statements as representing the feelings of our fellow students. Rather we believe them to have been created by you alone because of your own personal prejudices and jealousies.

We firmly believe that the rank and file of the University of Nebraska students are inseparably bound to each other regardless of their particular college and in spite of what any narrow-minded editor may say to magnify any differences which may exist.

To clarify our position, your accusations demand an answer.

You say that we are "the most isolated bunch on the campus." We are "isolated," but not in the manner in which you imply. We are "isolated" because we are working night and day to drive into our minds the knowledge and mental abilities that we must have in order that we shall not fail when our knowledge is put to test in defence of our country. The guns and tanks and ships that in the near future may happen to be designed by University of Nebraska engineering graduates must not fail because we possessed inadequate knowledge. We take our education with deadly seriousness that is often not fully appreciated by those who do not know us.

You also say that we represent "Nebraska nationalism." You can bet your life that we represent "Nebraska nationalism," but we also represent United States nationalism and world-wide nationalism. We are men of science and science is not bound by confining political boundaries.

We believe our education to be comparable to that obtained by any other good method, and we firmly believe therefore that we will have a very definite place in the post-war world both in technical and administrative positions. Our education will enable us to solve all future problems with sound logic and a knowledge of conditions as they exist at that time. Our minds will not be hampered by theories of history which may not apply logically to the future problems.

An engineering education in its entirety is a process whereby the mind is trained to solve any problem in a cool, logical, analytical manner. This training is indispensable to any educated man including the so-called statesmen.

As a conclusion I wish to remind you that we engineers like to call the Daily Nebraskan our paper too. Further outbursts of this nature will force us to do something concrete to change either the editor or the policies of the paper so that it will express more nearly the opinions of those who support it.

We trust that by this time you see your mistake and we therefore expect from you a sincere and complete public apology.

Yours respectfully,
Howard Westgate, an engineer.

Dear Editor:

It was with great interest that we read the Daily Nebraskan Sunday editorial. And it is with just a little amusement that we view its expressed wish to keep the engineer at his slide-rule drudgery, while "statesmen" design the new political and economic world.

We wonder, at times, about this more or less mythical statesman, schooled in history, who sees "reality as it is." For it seems to us that our government is made up of farmers, businessmen, lawyers and men from every walk of life, distinguished from their fellows only by a political ambition, or perhaps by a genuine interest in government and human relationship. And if these men, who no doubt have taken history in college, remember it no better than the students who failed so miserably on that now-famous history survey, then (Hallelujah!) the engineer may still have a chance.

And furthermore, as we look at the national and international mess we are now in, we think that a little engineering logic, efficiency, vigor and decisiveness, evidenced by our leaders, would do much to lift the world from this bloody cyclic rut—the same cyclic rut the history student studies so profoundly.

Finally, may we caution the writer of this rather amateurish editorial against advising any group, trade or profession to stick to its last, while the chosen few are planning the new order. Rather, we should be duty bound, according to the whole concept of our form of government (as any good history course will teach you, dear editor) to face the problem, think it through to the best of our ability, as individuals, and then vociferously support our beliefs, even at the risk of a pointed finger of scorn from one who passed History 10.

EDGAR DIXON.

P.S.: A few questions and comments, my dear editor. Why the dirty digs at the engineers this semester? Do you have an anti-engineering complex? It's possible I may have misunderstood your motives for writing that bit, but in that case, your tact is decidedly open to question.

It would probably flatter you to know how many engineers read that editorial of yours (ears burn!), but what would you say for the percentage of readers in any other college?

Do you know that one of your PBK history majors—probably destined to be a "statesman"—has been ranting of two years for a bloody revolution, with subsequent fascist rule?

Perhaps the engineers are isolated here on the campus, of necessity in classes, and for economic reasons or otherwise, socially, but I think a little study will convince you that they're tops as civic leaders, or what have you. Mr. Schacht, himself, is a prime example.

But most of all, why try to open old wounds, on a subject best left at rest—even if you wouldn't think of any other subject on which to editorialize at the last minute before the deadline.

Editor's Reply . . .

At the insistence of reader Westgate, we apologize for not saying in Sunday's editorial that:

1. Engineers represent "Nebraska, United States and World nationalism."
2. History will not hamper the minds of engineers when future problems must be solved logically.
3. Engineers are isolated because they are working "day and night" to drive into their minds the knowledge and mental abilities that they must have in order that they will not fail when their knowledge is put to the test in defense of our country.

The editorial was not intended to cause disunity or anything of the kind. The Daily Nebraskan certainly has no grudge against them, for never before have the engineers received as much publicity for their various affairs. There is no reason, moreover, why any paper should be anti-engineer.

The point of the editorial Sunday was this: that at the peace-table following the war, the most emphasis must be placed on the statesman, the man with the liberal, broad background rather than the engineer, the man, in the majority of cases, with the limited specialized knowledge of a technical field.

There need be no apology made for that point of view. It is neither disgusting, unpatriotic or un-American.

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